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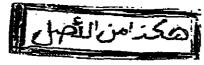
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THE AWARD-WINNING INDEPENDENT: EDITOR OF THE YEAR, CORRESPONDENT OF THE YEAR

THE INDEPENDENT

YOUR THREE SECTION PAPER: 26-PAGE NEWS SECTION PLUS 12-PAGE BUSINESS SUPPLEMENT PLUS 18-PAGE BROADSHEET REVIEW

Je ne regrette rien... perhaps I have been a little careless'

- Edith Cresson, French Commissioner

'I note with considerable satisfaction that I am whiter than white'

- Jacques Santer, EC President

'lt's a disaster... and it requires ruthless determination to deal with'

- Sir Leon Brittan, EC vice-president

'The President of the Commission should leave as soon as possible

- Tony Blair, British Prime Minister

*Santer must go now – Blair

TONY BLAIR called last night BY STEPREN CASTLE for Jacques Santer to pay the price for the fraud and misnanagement exposed by the official inquiry into the European Commission by standing down immediately as President.

After an imrepentant Mr Santer told a Brussels press conference he was "whiter than white", Mr Blair told the Commons that the Commission's response to Monday's highly critical report had been "wholly inadeonate". In an emergency statement

on the biggest crisis in the EU's history, the Prime Minister said: "The President of the Commission should leave as . soon as reasonably and practi- boys culture" in Brussels. cally possible."

During two hours of talks in Downing Street last night, Mr Blair urged Gerhard Schröder. the German Chancellor and holder of the European Union's rotating presidency, to seek fast-track agreement on a sucsor to Mr Santer at a sum-

■ Prodi to succeed

sacking page 3 Blair statement to

Leading article, Steve Richards, Monitor, Review, page 3

mit of EU leaders in Berlin next week. But Mr Schröder warned that it could take longer to find an acceptable candidate.

The summit, which is due to agree a new EU funding system and reform the common agricultural policy, will now be overshadowed by the flasco in

Mr Blair believes the priority is to remove Mr Santer and install a successor who can drive through reforms to the EU. He opposes the idea of a caretaker president – such as Sir Leon Brittan, the Commission Vice-President – running the Commission until January when Mr Santer's five-year term comes to an end

Mr Blair said: "The new president must be a political heavyweight, capably of providing leadership and authority to the Commission." Downing Street refused to say whom Mr Blair was backing for the post, its own merits.

and ANDREW GRICE

but he has publicly endorsed Romano Prodi, a former prime minister of Italy.

Privately, pro-EU British ministers fear the Brussels fiasco will harden British public opinion against the EU and joining the single currency.

But Mr Blair went on the offensive yesterday, presenting a paper to Mr Schröder proposing "root and branch reform" to the way the Commission operates, including a crackdown on fraud, financial mismanagement and what Downing Street called the "jobs-for-the-One minister said: "The door

is now open to radical reform in Europe. It is an argument we can win if we are bold enough. Reform is the only way the EU can recover its credibility." Earlier, in Brussels, Mr

Schröder said he wanted "to take a decision rapidly", and hinted that Mr Santer's role as caretaker president will be short-lived.

That followed an angry press conference at which Mr Santer declared himself to be "whiter conclusions of the report as "unbalanced". Mr Santer and several fellow commissioners were furious about the final chapter to the 144-page document which accused them of failing to accept political responsibility for the culture of corruption. He said the conclusions were "totally unjustified" and "shameful"

"I cannot accept this affirmation that the Commission has been responsible for fraud, irregularities and mismanage ment," he said.

Edith Cresson, the commissioner most seriously criticised, volunteered: "Perhaps I have been a little careless."

Colleagues and adversaries moved quickly to slap down Mr Santer. The President of the European Parliament, Jose Maria Gil-Robles, backed the inquiry findings and demanded a quick solution to the crisis. He said: "No one in our countries could imagine that a government which stands down because it doesn't have parliamentary confidence could stay in place for another nine months until

another government is elected." Even Sir Leon said: "I don't think this is the time to carp at the content or cavil at the wording of the report. It stands on

IT WAS the Burgermeister's

last stand, a final puffing of the petty functionary's chest, a valedictory outpouring of righteous indignation that anyone should have the impertinence to suggest that he might have failed in his job. It was also an

When Jacques Santer took the rostrum in Brussels yesterday, on the morning after the report of the night before, a touch of contrition from the Commission's President might

unmitigated disaster.

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

t have earned forgiveness. Not, however, after a performance that gave the word "impertinence" new meaning.

"I reject the conclusions of the report," he declared for openers. "The picture is distorted ... wholly unjustified." It was "a slur" on the reputation of 19,000 toiling and honest Eurocrats. And then the most breathtaking assertion of all, that the independent exformance to be "whiter than A curious proposition, to

Jacques Santer, who rejected the highly critical report into the European Commission as 'wholly inadequate' and declared himself 'whiter than white'

The last stand of the Burgermeister

put it mildly, given how the report singled out Mr Santer in person for failing to take a "meaningful interest" in the Commission's Security Office, which had been permitted to

turn into "a state within state". It was the spluttering outrage of a mayor of a middlesized city caught napping after one decent lunch too many -

perts had found his own per- which in a sense exactly describes the previous job experience of Jacques Santer, the one-time Prime Minister of

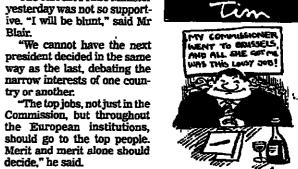
the 350,000 good citizens of the little state of Luxembourg. That Mr Santer was promoted so greatly beyond his station is to the credit of our own former prime minister John Major, who out of pique in 1994 vetoed the widely favoured candidacy of the Belgian Prime Minister, Jean-Luc

yesterday was not so supportive. "I will be blunt," said Mr "We cannot have the next

The current Prime Minister

way as the last, debating the narrow interests of one country or another. "The top jobs, not just in the Commission, but throughout the European institutions,

decide," he said.



INSIDE THIS SECTION

Heart surgeons inquiry Care failures occurred at every level, first day was told

ary Nelson killing

RUC asked Kent police to investigate solicitor's death

Eton pupils played bizarre fainting game, hearing told

Rail crash death toil Thirteen died when a train and truck collided in Illinois

Foreign P12.

Refugees fice civil war Thousands of refugees from Congo flooded into Zambia Foreign P13

Kosovo deal hitch

Foreign P13

KLA splinter group has

denounced peace agreement

England call up Catt

England have recalled the fly-half Mike Catt Sport P21

£400m bill for Airbus

"black hole" due to losses

Airbus Industrie has a £400m

INSIDE THE WEDNESDAY REVIEW

Steve Richards Can anyone control the monster of Europe

Ken Livingstone Labour's Scottish campaign is starting to sound Old Comment P4

Eileen Drewery, faith healer, answers readers' queries Features P8

You ask the questions

Susannah Frankel on the ready to wear collections





Sleep your way to the top.

Dine before you fly at US Club World Lounges. Sleep non-stop and arrive in better shape for business.

BRITISH AIRWAYS

The world's favourite airline

Europe is beheaded after nig

Prodi is the front-runner for presidency

ROMANO PRODL the former By STEPHEN CASTLE Italian prime minister, and in Brussels Javier Solana, Nato's secrefavourites to succeed Jacques Santer as European Commis-

successor next week, he istenure of office, and one which currency. united MEPs in disbelief.

winning the support of the a six-month mandate at first, Spanish Prime Minister, Jose with the expectation of a five-Maria Aznar, The two men year term starting in 2000. come from rival parties and personal relations between them open for at least some of the are not close.

Massimo D'Alema, his successor as Prime Minister

The field of candidates to includes Rudolf Scharping, Germany's Defence Minister, while outside possibilities include Wim Kok and Antonio Guterres, the Dutch and Portuguese Prime Ministers. Both are still in office and might find it difficult to extract themselves from their present posts.

Britain, for a quick resolution of the crisis, the timetable for the replacement of the Santer

There is speculation that a temporary candidate may take end of December. over from Mr Santer and would then see the Commission are includes Edith Cresson,

tary-general, emerged as early That might leave the way open for senior figures such as Hans van den Broek, foreign affairs commissioner, or Sir Leon Brit-As European leaders came tan, Commission vice-presiunder pressure to choose his dent, although his prospects may suffer from the fact Britain sued a strong defence of his is not a member of the single

It is more likely a new pres-As jockeying for key posts ident will be selected after an began, it emerged that Mr agreement by all 15 EU lead-Solana's prospects depend on ers, and that he or she will get That could leave the way

current commissioners to stay Mr Prodi has the backing of on until the end of the year. Germany indicated yesterday that it wishes to see the present regime staying in place as caretake over from Mr Santer also takers until the June European elections. But that was opposed by the European Parliament, as MEPs are convinced the administration must be removed before they have to face the voters.

Whatever happens, the shape of the new Commission will be very different, and only Despite pressure from sev- a minority of those now in office and commissioner for research al affairs. eral countries, including are likely to return to Brussels. Neil Kinnock, the British transport commissioner, received the Government's backing for commission remains unclear. a second term of office. Sir Leon is due to step down at the

The list of those who face the



Germany's Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (right), current EU president, and Tony Blair at Downing Street yesterday. Mr Schröder appealed for calm on the EU AFP

and education, who was at the centre of the crisis; the Commission vice-president Manuel Marin, who was planning to step down; Anita Gradin, commissioner for financial control; Padraig Flynn, commissioner for employment and social affairs; and Martin Bangemann, the commissioner for industri-

sion." Some ministers even

Mr van den Broek and Christos Papoutsis, the energy commissioner, are expected to bow out at the end of the year. If no substantial figure is chosen, either Sir Leon or Mr van den

Mr Santer may have sealed his fate and ensured his early fraud, irregularities and mis- the report unambiguously.

the report of a committee of independent experts.

"has to bear responsibility for Maria Gil-Robles, also backed

departure with a dramatic remanagement". Ms Cresson The President of the Com- outcry among MEPs. Alan Donmission described himself as nelly, leader of Labour's 60 "whiter than white". His team MEPs, said Mr Santer was "in accept the conclusion that it European Parliament, Jose

Its conclusions argued that po- even the slightest sense of reaction to the conclusions of poured petrol on the flames by litical responsibility "cannot be sponsibility". Although there telling reporters she had been a vague idea, a concept which in was no evidence of a case "careless", which produced an practice proves unrealistic". It "where a commissioner was diadded: "The studies carried out rectly and personally involved inby the committee have too often fraudulent activities", thererevealed a growing reluctance were instances where "com-Brock could be appointed as a 'of 20 commissioners could not denial". The President of the among the members of the hi-missioners or the Commission erarchy to acknowledge their re- as a whole bears responsibility sponsibility. It is becoming for instances of fraud, irregu-

Euro-sceptics ready to capitalise on the confusion

BRITISH MINISTERS fear that BY ANDREW GRICE the crisis in Brussels will play Political Editor into the hands of the Eurosceptics and make it harder for force "complacent" member Tony Blair to win public support states, led by France, to accept for joining the single radical reforms.

turn the débacle to his advantage by unveiling plans for wide-ranging reform of the

Allies insisted that he now had a golden opportunity to per-

Privately, however, pro-EU Yesterday Mr Blair sought to ministers were gloomy. "It is a significant setback," said one. "We thought we had killed off the main bogeyman when Oskar Lafontaine [the German Finance Minister] resigned. Now the sceptics have found suade other EU countries to another one in the Commis-

predicted that Mr Blair would dum he had planned to call after the next general election.

In an emergency Commons statement, Mr Blair agreed that "Europhobes" could exploit the crisis, but insisted that it was an "opportunity to push through root-and-branch reform of the Commission."

LIGHTING UP

be forced to delay the referen- held talks in Downing Street. The sweeping changes pro-

YESTERDAY

posed include: A new contract between the of government of the 15 EU member states. Setting up an independent in-

Last night he submitted a and financial irregularities. paper on Britain's plans to An overhaul of the commisshake up the Commission to sion's auditing procedures, management". But he reacted

Gerhard Schröder, the Ger-financial management, spend-coolly to demands for the Eu- was by no means solely re- the top people. Merit and merit

fully accountable for their budgets and programmes. Brussels Commission and the Anew disciplinary procedure leave "as soon as reasonably European Council - the heads for staff who fall short of and practically possible". expectations.

reforms proposed by the Brus-fully committed to reform. "We vestigation office to probe fraud sels inquiry report, which he said had "revealed a sad catalogue of negligence and mis-

greater powers to hold the Brus- he pointed the finger of blame

Cabinet sources said the Mr Blair also endorsed the new president would have to be need a new broom for the project to have credibility," said an insider.

Mr Blair said that Mr Santer

Mr Santer's appointment by

vetoing moves to install Jean-Prime Minister

man Chancellor, when they ing plans and awarding of ropean Parliament to be given sponsible for the problems, and alone should decide." he said. The Tories were buoyed by ■ Commission officials to be sels bureaucracy to account. at John Major, the former the controversy, which could He called for Jacques Santer, prime minister, who played a boost their prospects in the the Commission President, to crucial role in securing elections for the European

> The Opposition criticised Luc Dehaene, the Belgian Mr Blair for failing to learn a key lesson from the Brussels Mr Blair called for an end to inquiry. "The EU tries to do too the "horse-trading" which remuch and interferes too often. sulted in the outsider Mr San- It should be doing less, and ter getting the job five years doing it better," said William ago. The top jobs should go to Hague, the Tory leader.

BRITAIN TODAY Noon today 13 SEA FOG **FORECAST**

General situation England and Wales will have a dry and very mild day with an early banks of fog and low cloud lifting to leave surny spells in most places. The best of the sunshine is likely to be in central and southern areas with some dulle interludes over coasts and hills in the north and west. Scotland and Northern lealand with also be very mild with sunny intervals developing in shelternd eastern areas, but western regions will have a lot of cloud and some local drizzle. London, SE England, E Anglia, E Midlands, E England: Very mild with early cloud breaking to leave decent sunny spells. A light and variable breeze. Max temp 13-16C (55-61F).

Cent S England, W Midlands: Early log lifting to leave warm surshine. A light and variable breeze, Max temp 13-16C (55-61F). Channel Is, SW England: Mild with plenty of sunshine, but patchy mist and fo on some coasts and hills. A light and variable wind. Max temp 11-13C (52-55F). Cent N England, NW & NE England, Wales, Lake Dist, Isle of Man: Rather cloudy across the fills, but mild with periods of sunshine elsewhere. A light west to south-westerly wind. Max temp 13-15C (55-59F). NE & SE Scocland, Edinburgh, Aberdeen: Some cloud over the hills, but mild and dry with good sunny periods elsewhere. A moderate south-westerly wind.

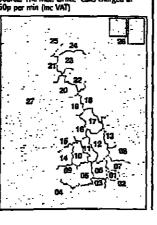
NW & SW Scotland, Glasgow, N & W Isless Rather cloudy with some drizzle on coasts and hills, but mild with a few sunny breaks possible. A moderate to Iresh south-westerly wind. Max temp 10-12C (50-54F). N Ireland: Cloudy on western coasts and hills but dry and mild with good sunny spells elsewhere. A moderate south-westerly wind. Max temp 11-14C (52-57F).

It will turn noticeably colder with sunny spells and showers in most places. The showers will be heaviest and most frequent in the north with sleet and snow mixed in. Drifting snow is likely over the Scottish fills.

Leytonstone, Major roadworks on new M11 link road, Until 31st December. Bristol: M5, J18-19, Major Rnother.

Mil link road. Until 31st December. Bristot: NS J18-19. Major Roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge. Until 23rd June 2001. Waswickshize: M42 Between J10 Tarmorth services and J9 Sution Coldfield. Roadworks and contratiow. Until 23rd April. South Yorkshire: M1 Between J34 Tinsley Viaduct. (A6109) & J34 Tinsley Viaduct (A6178). Shellield. Carriageway is reduced to two lanes southbound. Until 21st November 2000. Derbyshire: A6 Between Derby Southern Bypase (A50) and Shardlow Road round-about. East of Alvasion. Contration for work on now A50. Until 15th October. AA Roadwatch: Call 0336 401777 for





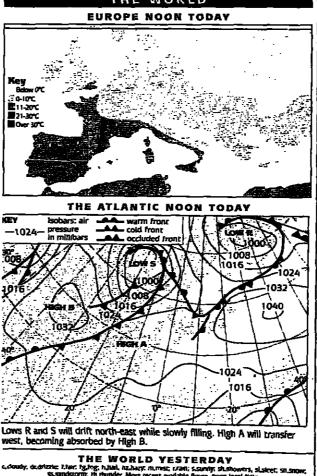
EXTREMES unniest: Lewes 10.8 hrs For 24hrs to 2pm Tuesday 57 57

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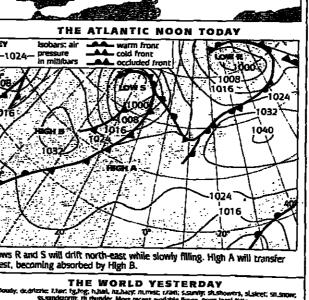
RAIN OR SHINE... THE RISK OF being hit by lightning in Singapore has become so high that the gov-

lighting shelters and fitting school playgrounds with earlywarning devices. Yesterday, one Thai labourer was killed and another injured when lightning struck their construction site. Singapore has one of the world's highest rates of lightning

ernment is erecting special



THE WORLD



swiftly declared. should certainly not involve case too busy trying to find suc-

Nations rush to back their own members

up to a frightening vacuum at the heart of the Brussels bureaucracy yesterday, but were quickly reassured by a wave of solidarity bursting from every capital of the continent. Solidarity, that is, for each nation's representative in Brussels.

Britain proudly led the way once more, with Tony Blair railying behind his beleaguered commissioners, Messrs Kinnock and Brittan. The others soon followed.

Italy, for instance, expressed itself appalled by the goings-on in Brussels, and demanded that the new commissioners be appointed quickly. The two Italian members of the discredited body, Emma Bonino and Mario Monti, were, of course, totally beyond reproach.

The Government expresses solidarity and appreciation for their deep commitment during these years ... and also for the correctness of their work, which was confirmed by the independent committee," Rome Finland seemed delighted

with the mass resignation, saying it should pave the way for a more efficient successor. But the Finnish Prime Minister, Paavo Lipponen, did not want the clear-out to go too far. It Erkki Lilkanen, who was in cessors. Germany is suffering charge of budgetary affairs.

"The Finnish government has full confidence in Commissioner Erkki Liikanen," Mr Lipponen said. "He has been fully cleared in the report."

THE CITIZENS of Europe woke By IMRE KARACS

So that's all right then. This scandal, after all, had nothing to do with the EU budget. And so it went on. "There is

no doubt that a new Commission must be appointed which has new people in important po-sitions," said Viktor Klima, the Austrian Chancellor.

Mr Klima obviously did not think the agricultural portfolio, which swallows a third of the EU's budget, is very "important", for he quickly added the following caveat: "That doesn't necessarily apply to all, however ... and I personally don't doubt the integrity of Commis-sioner Fischler."

And yes... Franz Fischler, the agriculture commissioner.

Not all countries, it has to be said, proved so patriotic. The French government pointedly refrained from mentioning Edith Cresson's name. And Germany stopped short of putting in a plug on behalf of its two stalwarts. Both, in fact, had been on the way out for sound political reasons, and the Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer's Greens cannot wait to

fill one of those pairs of shoes. The Germans were in any from a surfeit of superannuated politicians eminently qualified for the top job in Brussels. Alas, Helmut Kohi was ruled out by his party within minutes of his hat landing in the ring.

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EU IN CRISIS

after night of the long knives

'A completely ignominious way for them to be sacked'

THERE WAS not even a hint of BY KATHERINE BUTLER illicit sex but the sensational con- in Brussels tents of the 140-page report into cronvism and fraud in the European Commission could not have generated a bigger media frenzy if the Clinton investigator Kenneth Starr himself had been eading the inquiry.

Hordes of journalists, television crews and photographers stampeded when the trolley laden with boxes of the first copies was wheeled into the European Parliament at 6.45pm. Like bargain hunters on the first day of Harrods' sale they jostled each other out of the way, ripping copies away from rivals.

Within seconds, they were leaping into taxis or bellowing the juiciest quotes about France's commissioner Edith Cresson and her dentist down mobile phones to every capital in Europe.

A few hundred metres away at the Breydel building, the headquarters of the Commission, fleets of black limousines were massed. Inside, those commissioners who had not been quizzed by the committee of wise men on Sunday were seeing the report for the first time.

Franz Fischler, the Austrian in charge of agriculture, was not mentioned in the document. But Cresson to take the rap. as he turned the final page he told an aide to prepare a statewould resign. "He just read the conclusions and he knew it was all over" a source said.

MEPs were swift to bray for the Leonardo scheme, a blood but at that stage on Monyouth training project. day evening the targets were just Ms Cresson and, to a lesser extent, the Commission Pres-

flanked by Paul van Buitenen, the Commission whistle-blower who was suspended for revealing the corruption. The Tories called for all 20 commis to be sacked but few imagined this would happen.

"I have been very knnely" the Dutchman said, "And I still am not certain about what is going to happen to me."

Edith Cresson, the former commissioner for education and training who yesterday defiantly said "Je ne regrette rien", might have been thinking along the same lines as Mr van Buitenen, but she was giving nothing away.

The Commission was scheduled to meet at 9pm but the start time slipped as commissioners and their aides pored over the document. Some had brought in food, expecting a long night. But as the devastating im-

plications of the conclusions sank in - particularly the charge that the commissioners had lost control and had displayed not the slightest sense of political responsibility for the fraud and mismanagement - there was a final attempt to force Ms She had been singled out not

only for hiring her dentist in the ment. Whatever the outcome of fictitious capacity of visiting the Commission's meeting, he scientist, but also for deliberately misleading both her colleagues and the European Parliament over known fraud in MEPs were swift to bray for the Leonardo scheme, a £400m In ones and twos her col-

leagues beat a path to her door suggesting that she might want ident, Jacques Santer. Pat Cox, to reconsider her position. But the Parliament's Liberal leader, a phone call between Mr Santhe short lived resistance.

The state of all 20 commissioners.

Ritt Bjerregaard, the state of all 20 commissioners. tot gone before nightfall the French Prime Minister estab-MEP Edward McMillan-Scott The French were not going to Commission to accept responcalled a press conference allow a former prime minister sibility for the conclusions of the she saw no reason to be tarred

to become the sacrificial lamb. report and resign," she said. In any case, commissioners The speculation in Brussels and their private advisers were soon to witness their own demise on the closed circuit television link. It was an igno-

In the office of the British commissioner, Neil Kinnock, there was consternation when only the Spanish interpretation channel could be found. Pauline Green, leader of the 200 Socialists - who helped save the Commission a mass sacking in January - was about to make her public statement.

minious way to be sacked.

was that Mr Jospin's decision to stand by Ms Cresson led in turn to pressure from Paris on the French Socialist MEPs. The Socialist move ensured that if the commissioners did not go, they would be pushed. "After that a great calm de-

"The choice was pretty clear." The Commission's meeting began at 10.20pm with a fourminute introduction from Jacques Santer. The mass resignation scenario was tabled That was the turning point. immediately and met only

scended," recalled one official.

Ritt Bierregaard, the Dane game would be up. British Tory lished what many had feared. "We are calling on the European in charge of environment policy, was one of those who said

with the same brush as Ms a body the Commission ad- terday morning as the dis- cases of irregularities," he said. Cresson. Yves-Thibault de Silguy, France's commissioner for monetary policy, said he thought everyone should have resigned in January when the censure motion was first voted.

Both Mr Kinnock and the Irish Padraig Flynn said that although the report was unbalanced there was no response to the verdict but a collective resignation. Ms Cresson said little but maintained a demeanour one source summed up merely as "Cressonesque".

After agreeing to resign as

statement for the press Mr Ms. chler beat him to it with a statement announcing his own resignation. The game was up.

At about 10 minutes to 1.00am, a grim-faced Mr Santer took the lift down to the basement where the airless overheated press centre was took only a few seconds. There were no questions allowed and Mr Santer returned to his office.

The sun was shining yes-

journed, leaving Mr Santer to graced commission team recompose himself and draft a convened at the Brevdel, Early interviews on French radio had caught Ms Cresson off guard. For the first time she admitted she may have been "a little careless", although she still had "no regrets".

The crisis was the kind of criment with journalists. sis you only get in Brussels. Mr Santer appeared before the heaving with excitement. It press again this time to say he Brittan, to sum up events of the was "whiter than white" and would be going down fighting. of work can be reduced to six uncertain dawn broke.

Mr Fischler went to address a routine agricultural committee meeting. Mr Kinnock met a delegation from the European electronics and aviation industry, and the Finnish commissioner, Erkki Liikanen, bravely honoured a breakfast appoint-

It was left to the British trade commissioner, Sir Leon previous night most succinctly. "It is a disaster," he said in "I do not accept that four years a radio interview, as the new;



Journalists watching Edith Cresson speaking at European Commission headquarters in Brussels before Jacques Santer announced the body's resignation

Shadowy world of the 'state within a state'

WHAT TOPPLED the Commis- By STEPHEN CASTLE sion was not damning revelarack their tions of corruption but the ming Jacques Santer's "state within a state".

shadowy world of former intelligence and army officers run-

that the President controlled, staffed by a former French intelligence official, Claude Willeme, and a one-time Belgian police colonel. Although they reported di-

rectly to the office of Mr Santer, the palace guards became a law unto themselves, apparter, the palace guards became ently beyond the control of the Commission's most senior staff. The report complains that

"no supervision was exercised and a 'state within a state' was allowed to develop". The security staff even put the Commission's own internal

in Brussels

veillance. The inquiry concluded that they were a clique. "a private club for former police officers from Brussels or the vicinity, for whom special recruitment 'competitions' were arranged". The scandal which led to the

investigation revolved around the awarding of a contract for security work to the British security agency Group 4.

The report starts in 1992, highlighting the behaviour of 10 security guards who accompanied the then commissioner Jacques Delors to the Seville World Exhibition. "Their behaviour (feet on the table, heavy drinking etc) was considered intolerable," it said. However, when complaints were made, the director of the



Delors: 1992 controversy

staff". The document sheds light on how key posts in the security service were allotted. "On the recommendation from the director of security in Belgirm, the director of the security office recruited into the Commission Security Office an ex-colonel from the Belgian The ex-colonel then had to be moved from his post, five days after a heightened state of alert during the Gulf war, when "no particular measures had been

The report puts part of the blame for the state of the security service on Mr Santer and a lack of "meaningful interest".

The text directly indicts Edith Cresson for favouritism. The charge centres on her decision to employ Rene Berthelot, a dentist from her home town of Chatellerault as a scientific visitor. It notes Mr Berthelot's frequent "missions" to Chatellerault and says: "It is hard to understand why Chatellerault... should be almost the sole centre of interest of a visiting scientist whose remit... covered very wide fields."

The report is on the website: http://www.europarl.eu.int/ex-

fraud-busting team under sur- service simply "covered for his police [in December 1997]". perts Worst moment for fiasco

IF EUROPE'S most deadly By RUPERT CORNWELL. enemy had been allowed to choose the moment of the Eu-management of EU affairs thus EU, against the banana import

Monday night's resignation sions on regional and agricullargement to the east

that is still reeling from the departure of the country's finance settled for three months at least minister, and which has not

ropean Union's biggest insti- far "Europe is not without leadtutional crisis in 42 years, he ership," Chancellor Gerhard cultural policy. The financial could have done no better than. Schröder asserted yesterday. Others might beg to differ.

Leaders of the 15 EU memen masse of the European Com- ber countries cannot win. The benefit of the doubt until the mission has decapitated the choice lies between allowing a EU's central institution in the caretaker Commission shorn run-up to long-overdue deci- of credibility to stay in office or Agenda 2000, reordering the devoting precious time and en- farm and regional spending tural policies, and financial and ergy to the task of nominating that accounts for the overstitutional reform - all of them a new one. A further complicapreconditions to the planned ention will be the June elections for must budget and streamlining It comes, moreover, midway suming that the new assembly through a German presidency insists on its right to approve a tirely under the weight of a new executive, nothing may be union of 20, 21, or even 26.

But business will not wait. the Gordian knot at their sum-

clare a moratorium in its doublebarrelled trade assault on the regime and the common agrimarkets will not give the euro, which has dropped 8 per cent since its January launch, the Commission's house is in order.

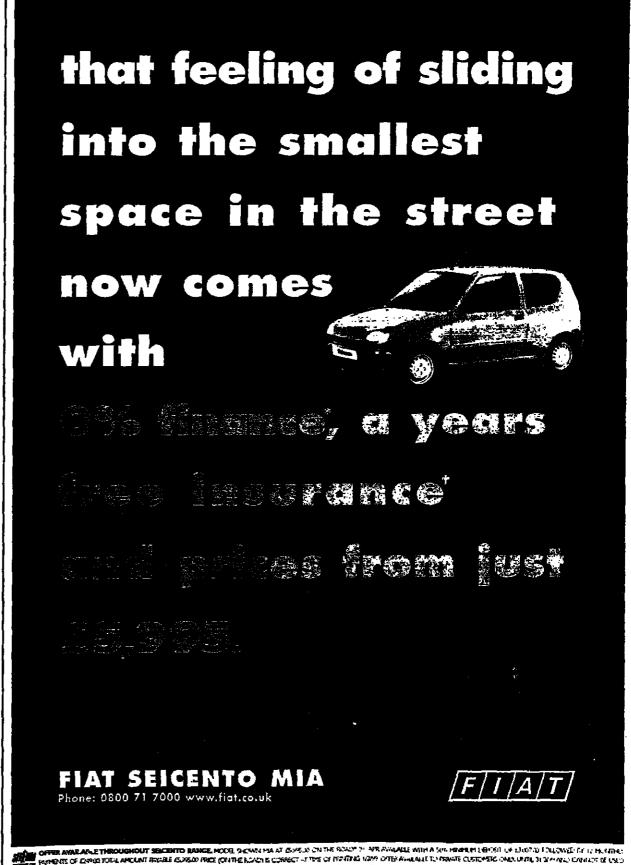
Most important of all is whelming bulk of the EU's anthe European Parliament, As- institutions which barely function now and would collapse en-

EU leaders were due to cut covered itself with glory in the The United States will not demit in Berlin next week. Dis-

tracted by the implosion in Brussels, they will now find the task even more difficult, and the whole business may slip into the second half of 1999, by which time the Euro-novice Finland will have assumed the presidency. All members accept that without a deal on Agenda 2000, enlargement will be impossible. Small wonder that Sir Leon

Brittan, the outgoing vice-president of the Commission and Britain's senior representative in Brusssels, yesterday described events as "a disaster" which had to be handled with "ruthless determination".

But ruthless determination has not been a hallmark lately of either the member states nor the Commission which runs Europe in their name.



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TOMORROW (Chronic failure' at heart hospital)

A PICTURE of a chronically By JEREMY LAURANCE malfunctioning hospital was painted yesterday at the opening of the public inquiry into the deaths of babies who underwent heart surgery at Bristol

Royal Infirmary. Tracey Clarke described failures at every level in the care of her daughter Melissa, who died 10 days after undergoing

heart surgery in October 1991. The mistakes, omissions and lack of care described by Mrs Clarke, 36, from Devon, went far beyond the behaviour of the husband Graham is planning

Health Editor

surgeons who were found guilty of serious professional misconduct by the General Medical Council (GMC) last year. She spoke of communication failures, faults in equipment, lack of support and a reluctance to confront problems which resulted in Melissa being kept on a ventilator for days after she

was brain dead. Mrs Clarke, who with her

witnesses due to give evidence to the inquiry, chaired by lan Kennedy, professor of health law and ethics at University College, London.

Melissa was born with the main arteries to her heart transposed, causing her frequently to turn blue because too little oxygen was getting into her blood. She was operated on by Janardan Dhasmana, one of the three doctors found guilty by the GMC last year. Hospital

saw her daughter immediately after the surgery, said: "She looked lovely. She was pink and all the blue tinge had gone. I thought everything was fine."

It emerged yesterday, however, that 48 hours after the operation a problem occurred with the ventilator helping Melissa to breathe. A postmortem examination report, which Mrs Clarke did not see until several years later, said a doctor who said everything Melissa had suffered respira- was going as planned. Those

tilator". The report said it was "several hours" before "satisfactory oxygenation" was achieved. A second record referred to "split tubes" on the

ventilator. Mrs Clarke told the inquiry: "On the Thursday [nine days after the operation] I was not happy with what I was being told. I rang twice, the second time at 10.30pm, and I spoke to

legal action against the infir-mary was the first of at least 500 went well. Mrs Clarke, who mechanical failure in the ven-mind." Next morning site and her husband were called to the hospital. "We walked into the intensive care unit and all the nurses turned their backs on us."

After a three-hour wait, the couple saw Dr Stephen Bolsin. the consultant anaesthetist credited with blowing the whistle on the surgery failures. He admitted there was no hope for Melissa and that she was brain-

The next day, the hospital told Mrs Clarke her daughter was time to switch off the ventilator Half an hour later a nurse phoned to say Melissa had died in her arms.

cons

The infirmary omitted to inform the Clarkes' local hospital in Excter that Melissa had died and six months later the couple received a letter about a missed appointment. Last month, eight years after their daughter's death, they learned the infirmany had kept her heart fuctwo. months after the post-mortem examination.

Black youth in coma after racist beating

ously ill in hospital last night after being beaten into a coma by a gang of white youths in a

racially motivated attack. David Virgo, 19, was punched to the ground and then kicked unconscious after leaving a pub disco in the West Midlands with two friends on Saturday night. He recovered consciousness yesterday.

Witnesses told police the trainee landscape gardener's head was "kicked like a football". His mother June was at his bedside last night at Rus-sells Hall Hospital in Dudley, where his condition was described as serious but stable.

The attack is believed to be the most serious racial incident in Britain since the publication last month of Sir William Macpherson's report into the death of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence.

Detective Inspector John Larkin, of West Midlands Police, said: "We know David was viciously assaulted. He was punched to the floor and repeatedly kicked. One witness said his head was kicked like a

"It was a racially motivated attack, mercilessly and brutally inflicted. This was an horrific and brutal assault on a lad who had gone out to enjoy himself for an evening with friends."

Home Affairs Correspondent

Mr Virgo's father, Eluid, said last night: "When I was told what had happened to my son I could not believe it . Nobody deserves to be treated like that. The people who did this are wicked men."

The victim's sister, Marie, aged 29, said: "I was really shocked when I saw him. His face was badly beaten and the major injuries are to his head. He is a fun-loving quiet lad who likes to go out with his mates. He never goes out looking for trouble."

Chris Myant, of the Com-mission for Racial Equality, said the attack was a signal that society as a whole, not just the police, had to make more strenuous efforts to tackle racism.

He said: "This shows that unfortunately there are young people in Britain who don't appear to have shared the general public response to the death of Stephen Lawrence."

Police believe there were three members of the white gang and are appealing for witnesses to the attack, which happened at about 11.30pm outside a fish and chip shop in Blackheath High Street. Earlier in the evening Mr Virgo and his friends had visited a disco at the



An image of actor Terence Stamp will be on show in "The Eye That Never Sleeps' the first retrospective of nearby George and Dragon pub. | work by British photographer Terence Donovan opening today at the Museum of London until 1 August

'Sun' sets on career of spin doctor

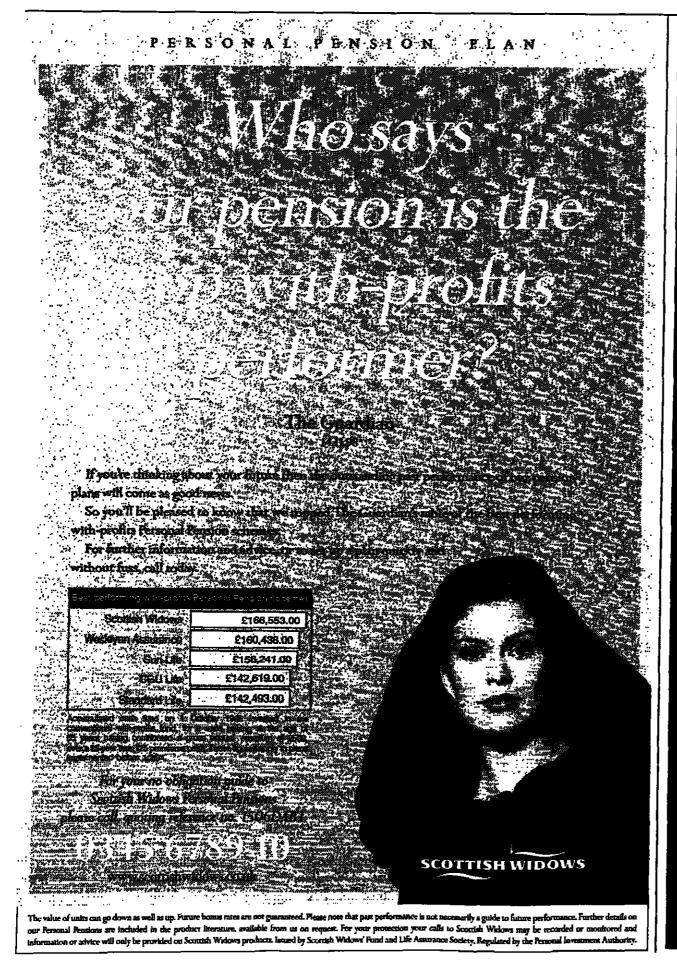
BY RHYS WILLIAMS

THE JOURNALISTIC CAFEER OF Peter Mandelson's former side, Benjamin Wegg-Prosser, ended before it began yesterday when it emerged that he will no longer be joining The Sun.

Mr Wegg Prosser had been expecting to start work as an assistant to the paper's editor. David Yelland, next Tuesday However, following the hardening of The Sun's opposition to the euro, the two sides have agreed to part company even though, strictly speaking, they did not come together in the .. first place. Sources indicated that the split was also precipitated by fears among The Sun's political staff that employing Mr. Wegg-Prosser would lead to accusations that it was climbing into bed with New Labour

"The Sun has decided it is no longer appropriate to employ me following its decision to take a more emphatic line on the euro," Mr Wegg Prosser 24. said yesterday: "[It] has acted. honourably throughout."

The Sun announced it was. hiring the former Labour aide in the wake of Mr Mandelson's resignation as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in January. Mr Wegg-Prosser was expected to earn £43,000 for acting as a political adviser to Mr Yelland. It is understood the paper's political staff were decidedly cool about the idea.



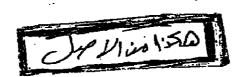
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INDEPENDENT

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THE CHIEF Constable of BY PAUL WAUGH Northampton police raised the stakes in the controversy sur-rounding Labour MP Joe Ashton yesterday when he claimed the backbencher had given "misleading" information to his officers.

Chris Fox, the head of the force, appeared to directly contradict the Bassetlaw MP's account of how he was found in a massage parlour during a po-

that Mr Ashton was on the premises in the Northampton parlour, Mr Fox said that his officers had been forced to run a computer check to check the MP's identity.

Mr Fox said that Mr Ashton was subsequently interviewed by police in the presence of his solicitor and declined to give a witness statement

The Police Constable said he had decided to give more de-tails about the raid on the Thai massage parlour in Northampton last November because much of the information was already in the public domain.

Four people were arrested on suspicion of committing sexual offences and a number of That women were deported for breaches in the immigration

> The police announcement came a day after Mr Ashton denied that he had taken part in or paid for any sexual services at the parlour and said he had not given "inaccurate particulars" of his name and address.

The 65-year-old MP said on Monday that he was considering calling for a full Police Complaints Authority inquiry into how his name had been leaked

He claimed that the reports in Sunday tabloid newspapers could have only come from Northamptonshire Police and warned that he might take the ble's statement.

Political Correspondent

matter up with the Data Protection Registrar.

Mr Fox said yesterday that if any member of his staff was volved in leaking information to the media about the raid they would be "dealt with in the strongest possible way".

No official complaint had been received, but he said that the force had its reputation and integrity to protect and would treat seriously any allegations of breaches of confidentiality.

"Allegations of this kind can be extremely damaging to the force and I have yet to find out why people are so sure that any leaks must have come from Northamptonshire police." he said. "There were a great many other people with knowledge of this case - defendants, witnesses, legal representatives, other organisations and other

He would be writing to Mr Ashton to ask him to substantiate his allegations that his police force might have been responsible for leaking details.

A statement by the force said: "When questioned at the weekend about Mr Ashton's presence at the massage parlour during the raid, Northamptonshire Police confirmed that one man was present when officers executed their warrant.

"They said he was not committing any offence and that he declined to assist the police as a witness, which he was perfectly entitled to do.

"However, now that it is in the public domain, Northamptonshire Police confirm that Mr Ashton was present at the massage parlour when the warrants were executed."

The Labour Party refused to comment on the Chief Consta-



Miss Andrey Collins (left) and Miss Diana Rait Kerr, among the first MCC women members, with a portrait of WG Grace Stefan Rousseau

Women enter Lord's inner sanctum

THE LONG Room at Lord's By JOHN DAVISON cricket ground yesterday opened its doors to women and made history when the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) proudly displayed its

The occasion marked the end of more than 200 years of resistance to women in this, the most famous club in cricket, and took place at the home

of the sport.

ident, said: "I hope you enjoy less we had a women's team your membership. Don't relax and women members. A simtoo much - we will need your ple equation. The first MCC

experience and belp as the culture of this great club first female members. Assuring the 10 women that

political correctness", he added: "The manimous think-" ply this ... we could not claim liner through 180 degrees," he the progress of this, he kept to be a great cricket club un-

women's team takes the field on May 11 in East Molesey, Sur-

It had been one matter for they have "not been pawns in a committee to decide on such the popular game of social or a change and quite another to persuade almost 18,000 mem-bers to agree with it. "It was Tony Lewis, the MCC pres- ing of the committee was sim- like turning an ocean-going here today, because during the wood from the trees."

One of the first women members, former England women's cricket captain Rachael Heyhoe Flint said: "I might be referred to as the catalyst, who in 1991 had the temerity to apply to become a member." Among her supporters was the late commentator Brian Johnston, and she said: "I wish Johnners was

saying to me, 'it will eventually happen, but I doubt whether I shall see it in my lifetime'."

Former England cricketer Lord Cowdrey said: "I think it's a wonderful day and I look forward to the day when the MCC ladies cricket team makes a big impact in the game."

Another former England captain, Ted Dexter said: "It it just took a little time to see

Chess to get sport status

By JOHN DAVISON

THERE was rejoicing in the cerebral world of chess yesterday, following the news that the game of wit and guile is about to make it to full sporting status.

Being ranked alongside the likes of football, athletics and synchronised swimming means that chess would be eligible for grants from sporting bodies.

The announcement was made by Tony Banks, the Sports minister, in a Commons debate on Monday who said the Government was willing to legislate for the necessary changes. The British sports councils would also have to change their royal charters in order to accommodate chess, he said, after which the new "sport" should also be eligible for lottery funding.

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"This is excellent news," said Robin Mackley, a director of the British Chess Federation. "It is something we have been striving to achieve for many years."

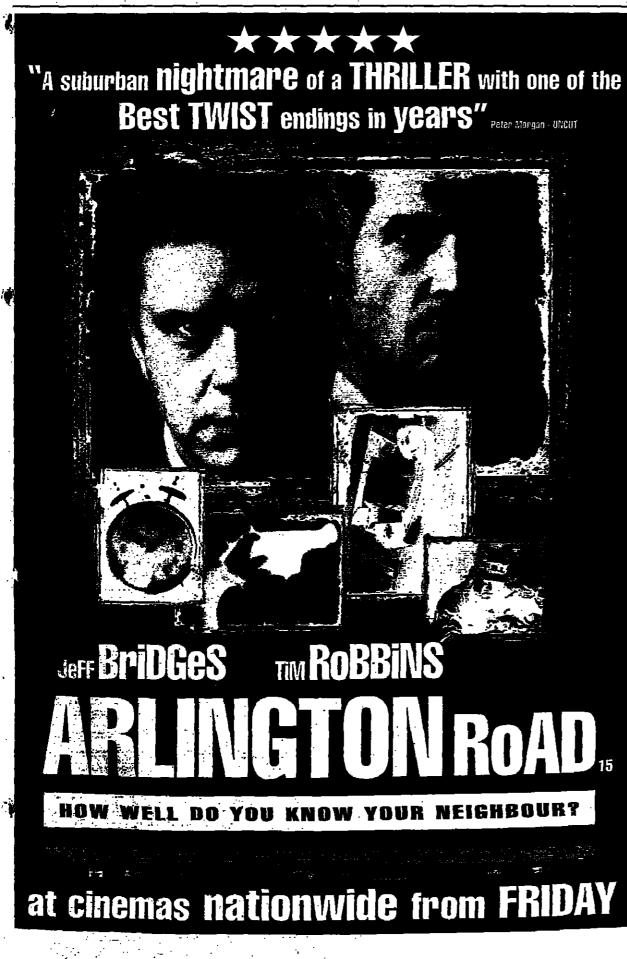
But difficulties revolve about the definition of a sport in the 1937. Physical Training and Recreation Act, which inconveniently for chess includes the idea of some degree of physical effort. No problem, said the bold Mr Banks, he will simply have it altered. Chess and other "mind games" are to included in a "cultural framework Bill".

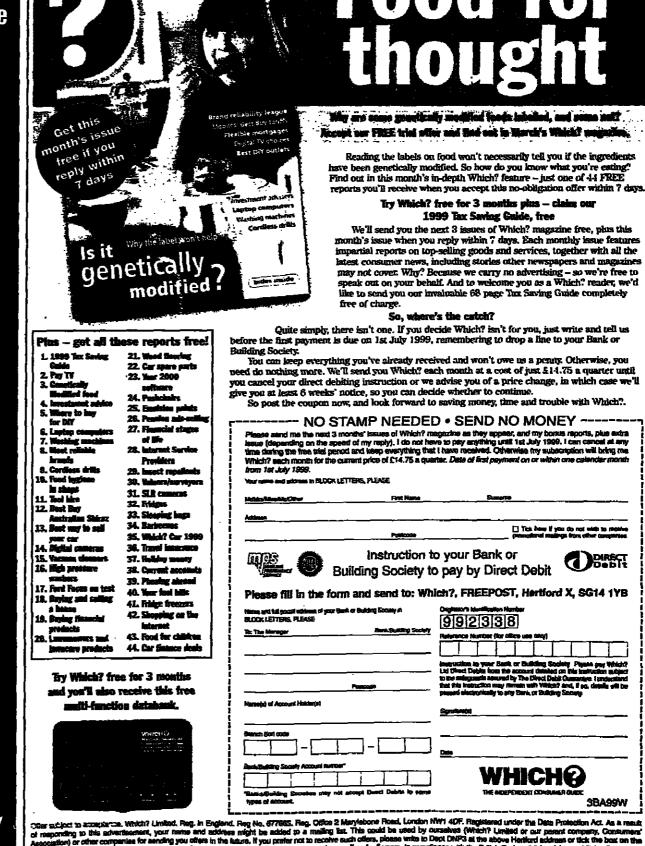
The debate was introduced by Evan Harris, Liberal Democrat MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, himself a former schoolboy chess champion. He pointed out that Britain was the second- or third-best chess nation in the world, "Our success at it is something we should be more proud of," he said. Support from an unexpected

source came from Ellery Hanley, the legendary rugby league player and coach at St Helens. "It's got my vote," he said, having been assured that he wasn't the victim of a "wind up". "I think it is good to have an outlet in doing something else. Mine is chess ... It gives you that time to think, and patience as well.'

Eric Cantona, that other sporting sage, could not have out it better.

Leading article, Review, page 3





Nelson assassination: Kent chief constable will head murder inquiry in effort to quell rumours over links to bombing

Police to investigate RUC 'collusion'

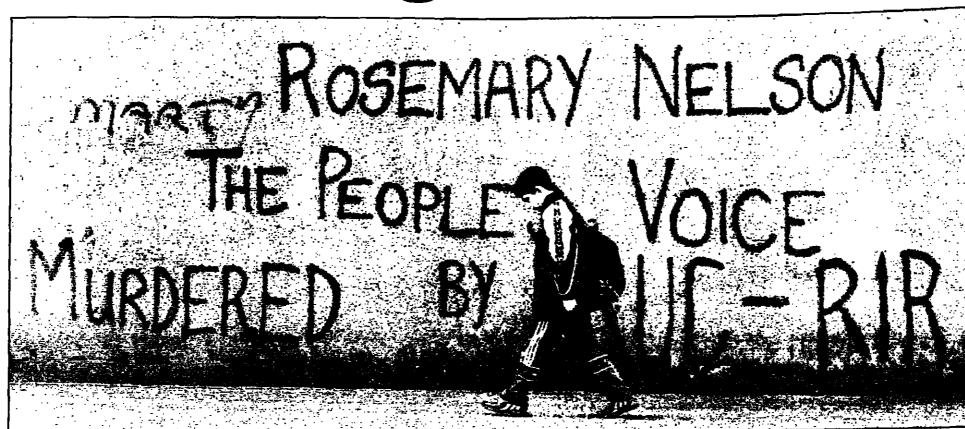
Ireland Correspondent

THE ROSEMARY Nelson killing and the unanswered questions surrounding it yesterday resulted in the Royal Ulster Constabulary calling in officers from England and from the FBI to assist in its investigation.

The move followed a wave of criticism and allegations against the RUC from nationalist and human rights sources. With accusations of collusion thick in the air, the force clearly believed it had to move swiftly to counter criticisms that it would be investigating itself.

The Chief Constable, Sir Ronnie Flanagan, announced he had asked the Chief Constable of Kent, David Phillips, to head the investigation, and that the FBI would also be involved. He added: "I think it is important, when there are grave concerns about Mrs Nelson on the international front, that their involvement will also give this investigation an international dimension as well as added independence. I recognise this is an unprecedented case in the nature of the sort of allegations that have

In Washington, the Northern liefs into her work". Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, described Mrs Nelson, who was fatally injured by an undercar boobytrap bomb on Monday, as "a brave woman in the past six months, the pos-



Graffiti that appeared after the murder of Rosemary Nelson. The solicitor claimed she had been the victim of 'numerous death threats' from police officers Alan Lewis

who stood up for what she believed in and carried those be-

Although the murder was claimed by the Red Hand Defenders, a small grouping re-sponsible for two other killings

sibility that it had help from a larger loyalist organisation is being investigated. Undercar boobytraps were a regular feature of the IRA's campaign of violence until the early Nineties. but they have remained outside the capabilities of almost all loy-

Get on the Net

alist organisations. The exception to this has been the Ulster Defence Association, which has mounted four such attacks in which resulted in a death. The possibility of a large-

litical spectrum are wondering how the killing will affect the just over two years, one of peace process and the chances of finding agreement on a new, developed government. scale return to UDA violence is

In Lurgan, Co Armagh.

of major concern to the au-

thorities. All elements of the po-

parish priest Father Kieran McParlan said Mrs Hamilton's husband and three children were shocked and distressed by the killing. "They are numb, feeling very helpless and in need of support and care."

In the city of Londonderry,

solicitors staged a march to an RUC station. One of them, Paddy McDermott, said they wished to express disquiet at the murder and solidarity with the Nelson family. "We wish to make it clear that we want to

dent investigation into Rosemary's death and into the threats which were made against her life."

Param Cumaraswamy the United Nations special investtigator to whom Mrs Nelson had complained of police intimidation, said he had feared for her life. Describing her as a very courageous buman rights lawyer, he added: Though I feared that Rose mary's life was at stake. I really didn't expect this to happen to her and this is really a shock."

Mrs Nelson had been due to meet a police watchdog body on 30 March to hear the results of an investigation into her complaints that she had been the subject of death threats and assaults from offcers of the RUC. She had arranged to meet the Independent Police Complaints Commission to discuss the findings of an inquiry set up 🦨 after a UN human rights report last year, which quoted complaints from Mrs Neisar that she had been the victim of numerous death threats".

It was the latest in a long line of reports into human rights issues in Northern Ireland which describe a pattern in which RUC detectives questioning paramilitary suspects are said to threaten both the suspects and their lawyers.

Leading article,

Mowlam plea for gesture to end stalemate

MO MOWLAM led a minute's si- By Andrew Marshall lence in Washington yesterday for the murdered solicitor Rose mary Nelson. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was in the United States for meetings and St Patrick's Day cele-

Ms Nelson had been identified by human rights groups as being at only "low-grade" risk in Northern Ireland, said Ms Mowlam. She had not wanted protection from the RUC.

Ms Mowlam said that she believed a way out of the current impasse over the new Assembly was possible, and that Northern Ireland was "a hair's — stretched out for weeks if not breadth away" from a deal that months. He also said he was would unblock progress on the concerned that the issue of denew executive.

British officials said that hopes were rising that a deal would be made following talks today in Washington between on policing in Northern Ireland the leaders of the Northern Ireland political parties and President Bill Clinton.

Ms Mowlam, Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, David Trimble, the First Minister, and Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Fein, will all be in Washington for the talks.

We are very far along this road. It would be a tragedy if we didn't keep on walking down it." said Ms Mowlam. "A gesture ... a beginning" was needed to end the stalemate between the nationalists and loyalists over whether Sinn Fein could take its place in the executive before decommissioning began. "Everybody is going to have to move. everybody is going to have to do something," she said.

in Washington

David Trimble said that he hoped President Clinton would ask Gerry Adams to begin decommissioning. "The important thing that can be done by people here in Washington is to use what influence they have with those elements in Northern Ireland who have yet to begin their end of implementing the agreement," he said.

Sinn Fein are playing a "long game" he added, saying that he feared that progress on decommissioning might be commissioning might become entangled with the forthcoming report from Chris Patten, the former governor of Hong Kong.

US officials say that Mr Clinton will reiterate that all parties must respect the spirit as well as the letter of the Good Friday Agreement, and that some movement from Sinn Fein is necessary.

Seamus Mallon of the SDLP has outlined a formula that would see further British military withdrawals and demilitarisation, efforts to build confidence by identifying the burial sites of some of Northern Ireland's many "disappeared", and a clear commitment to begin disarmament

But the key would be a change of tack from Sinn Fein. "I think there's room in there for Sinn Fein to move," he

8 M. B. 1889



Doctor 'ordered mercy killing' A nurse told a General Medical Council disciplinary hearing yesterday that she had refused to take part in a mercy

killing. June Bleasdale was deputising matron at a nursing home in Preston in 1995 when she claims Dr Ken Taylor. told her to withhold food supplements from Mrs X, 85, who died 58 days later. The case was adjourned until tomorrow.

President of NUS re-elected A LEFT-WING challenge for control of the 3 million strong

National Union of Students was defeated yesterday as Andrew Pakes, the Labour candidate, was re-elected for a second term as president. Mr Pakes took more than 55 per cent of the vote at the NUS conference in Blackpool.

Villagers protect ringing of bells PURCHASERS OF new homes being built just a few yards from All Saints Church, Thurlestone, Devon, are being asked to sign an undertaking never to object to the sound of its bells, regarded as a cherished part of village life.

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Police stations , ignored by public

stations, with their reassuring blue lamps and 24-hour service. are numbered. A new study has found that many stations are so dilapidated and inconveniently located that they are

Birtley police station, near Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, is, or rather was, a perfect example of the problem which has been highlighted in the Audit Commission's report. A police survey found that during one year not a single member of the



PC Austin, who worked at

public telephoned or visited the station, as PC Trevor Austen, who was stationed there, confirmed. The people of Birtley (population 15,000) did not even notice when it was

closed down by the police. Superintendent Brian Graham, who is in charge of the area surrounding Birtley in the Northumbria police region, said: "There was not a soul going to the station. It was in the Dark Ages and would have been very expensive to undate. It was at the wrong end of the town and people were teleCrime Correspondent

phoning our central control room if they had a problem. We closed it down and didn't tell the public to see what response we would get; no one noticed."

The building is for sale and has been replaced by a mobile station in a caravan, which has resulted in a drop in crime.

The Audit Commission report, "Action Stations - Improving the Management of the Police Estate", found that policing priorities and the public's needs were rapidly changing. A survey in North-amptonshire discovered that people were more likely to go to a police station to report lost or stray dogs than to give details of a crime. The most popular reason for a visit to one of the 2,000 stations in England and Wales is to inquire about lost or found property, which accounts for one in five trips. Only three in every 100 people go to a station to report a crime.

The report claims that communities often fear that their area will be less safe without a local police station. "In fact, closing some stations or contracting opening times can release officers for more patrol," says the study by the public spending watchdog. Only a quarter of police sta-

tions are open 24 hours a day and most public contact takes place by telephone. Some forces, such as Greater Manchester, Sussex, and Lothian and Borders, have installed interactive computers on streets which have direct video links to police control rooms.



Bluewater: a shopping centre that has everything - except a sense of restraint

shopping mall in Europe and, as revealed at yesterday's opening, it is also probably the strangest. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Most

shopping malls are ghastly. Bluewater is not ghastly: it has seven lakes, a forest and 10,000 daffodils to blunt the truth of what goes on here. And that is shopping so excessive - there are 320 retail outlets - that it might be an Olympic sport before long. Bluewater's spokeswoman

does not agree. "It's not really a shopping mall at all. It's more of a Destination Day Out." She said I couldn't miss it. She was right. Bluewater looks like a fu-

BLUEWATER IS the largest By ANN TRENEMAN

turistic mini-city. The building has pointy bits on the roof which the architect, Eric Kuhne, says are supposed to resonate with the shape of the ny behind Bluewater Kentish oast house. It reminded me of Madonna's old Gaultier bustier but that could just be because he's from Texas and Fm from Kent. It is easy to find and, with

13,000 parking spaces in spe-cially designed people-friendly car parks (evidently a new concept), it is easy to park. Inside, you find yourself in a "welcome area". I later learn this is designed to prepare me spend, spend, spend. "Here's a place to park your Spencer and House of Fraser

husband, park your coat, get a cappuccino and then get ready to punch a hole through your credit card!" exulted Stuart

I diri none of those things but did manage to get lost. Bluewater comprises three malls designed for three shopping experiences (I'm sorry to use such language but everyone does after breathing mall air for a few hours). The Guildhall is up-market, the Rose Gallery is family focus, the Thames Walk is the High Street. They

are arranged in a triangle with

each corner anchored by a

store: John Lewis, Marks &

rience I was supposed to be having, when I met a man.
"Hello there!" he said. Hornery, chairman of Lend Lease, the Australian compa-"Who are you?" I demanded. Why, I'm just someone sav-

ing hello," he said. "Are you sure?" I asked. "Yes," he said. I was still suspicious. why are you here?"

He then revealed he was responsible for the toilets. He said they were the best toilets in any shopping mall ever. Quality, quality, quality.

The next man I met was the architect. Mr Kuhne is very large and tall, which is exactly how a Texan should be, and told me that Bluewater had

There I was, lost and not even knowing what shopping expe-posed the sonnet in July 1996 as a way of distilling the project's ethos. His sonnet begins, "White chalk cliffs and waters blue/surround the crystal city new" and ends with. Build this dream with forth-

right hands and hearts that best with industry". But he said that Bluewater was really best summed up by Keats. He said:

"To one who has been long in city pent, Tis very sweet to look into the fair

And open face of heaven to breathe a prayer Full in the smile of the blue

firmament." I said that I wasn't sure that took in the £350m investlong enough to say that actually, with the shops in, the place was now worth £1.12hn. Keats' words could be found engraved around the corner.

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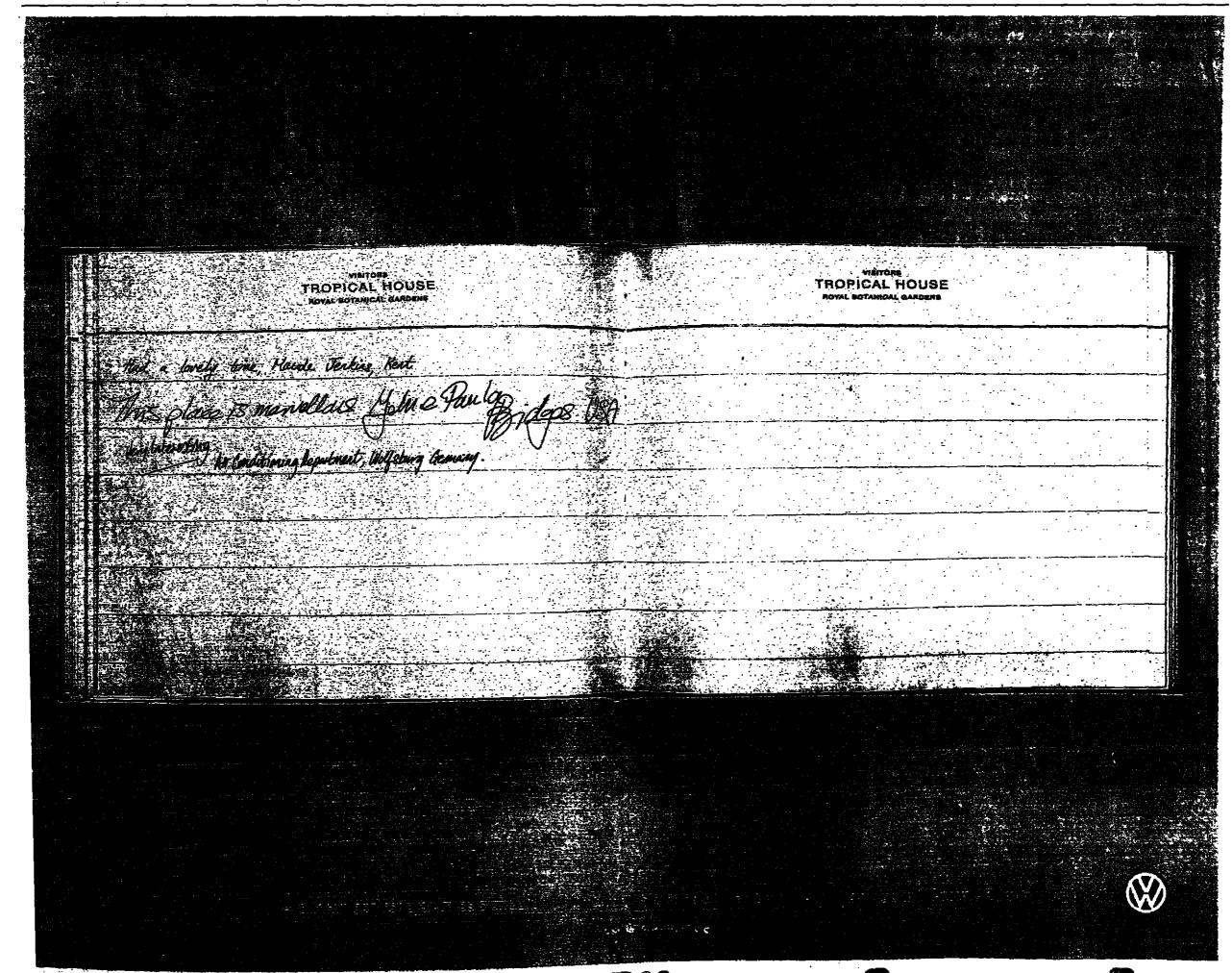
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Bluewater is dotted with little seating areas. Most of the people seated in them are men. I introduced myself to Tony Sheppard, who had just bought a video. "Actually I'm really here to buy a wedding ring." He and his fiancee have been engaged for three years. He had already seen a few rings he liked. I mentioned poetry. "Great! I need some of that for the wedding." I didn't have the heart to tell him he is right smack in the middle of a Shopping Experience.



Blair takes credit for mucking out the Augean stables

European Commission - a cleansing torrent which swept both the left behind a damp and slightly astonishing vacancy.

Yesterday the leaders of both parties turned up in the House of Commons to argue about the best ways of finishing the job and of preventing the manure from accumulating all over again. In theory, at least, the stimulating events of the past 24 hours were up for grabs by two implacably opposed groups -

Blair's position could best be "time for fewer horses".

Mr Blair began his statement by claiming that the broom which had initiated this scouring flood actually had the Labour Party's name penned on to its handle - the motion to establish the committee of experts having come from the Labour group of the European Parliament. been swept away and along with Tory MPs jeered loudly at this self-them, perhaps, the objections of for Northern farm management.

AT THE beginning of the week, the the pro-stable faction and the anti-serving historical footnote and, in Committee of Independent Experts stableites - but only one could finally truth, it did provide an uncharachad diverted a stream through the dung-spattered stables of the asset. The fight for possession was a speech that was otherwise brisk clearly going to start at once. Mr and commanding. The tone was not that of someone attempting to resleazy and the spotless before it and summed up as "more vigorous cover from a nasty setback but of stable hands now"; Mr Hague's as a man capitalising on an unexpected stroke of fortune.

For some time Britain had been calling for better waste management. only to be told by some European colleagues that complete hygiene was impracticable and by others that a bit of manure was good for the livestock. Now those arguments had



those who did not want to enter the stable. Handled in the right way, Mr Blair argued, this could be a triumph

Matters were a little more difficult for Mr Hague, who at one point had the audacity to demand that the Government act decisively "to restore public confidence in European institutions".

"Public confidence in European institutions" is very last thing that Mr Hague actually wants. In truth, he and other Eurosceptics had woken to gloomy news yesterday; if you want to continue insulting a man on account of his unpleasant stink it is naturally a bit of a blow to find that he has just taken his first bath for 20 years and is currently browsing the anti-perspirant counter at Boots.

The only option open to Mr Hague was to argue that the problem was physiological and not superficial - that mere cosmetic changes of personnel would not prevent this noisome pollution from arising again, only a diminution of the scale of the European Com-

mission's activities. Mr Blair came back hard and personal, reading out endorsements of Jacques Santer's qualities from John Major and Francis Maude and then noting, pointedly, that the Conservative Party had "a habit of appointing compromise candidates who seem like a good idea at the time".

He also asked, like a man who cannot believe his luck, whether Mr Hague really had just committed the Conservative Party to a unilateral withdrawal from the Common Fisheries Policy:

Mr Hague nodded, having no alternative, but he didn't nod very vigorously and he didn't look very exhilarated as he did it. Whereas Mr Blair could plausibly claim to be surfing on this tidal wave, using its impressive momentum to get where he wanted to go in the first place. Mr Hague appeared to be tumbling along in its wake, trying desperately to keep his head above water as he went.

Failings in EU tolerated 'for far too long'

"ROOT AND branch reform" of the European Commission was By SARAH SCHAEFER demanded by MPs from all sides yesterday as Tony Blair called for an entirely new sioners, should also be preframework for fighting fraud and financial irregularities in the EU. Opening his Commons statement. Mr Blair said it was "absolutely right" that the whole Commission had resigned because the inquiry report revealed a "sad catalogue of negligence and mismanage-

"It is a damning report. It catalogues in key areas a culture of complacency and lack of accountability, and in some cases nepotism, that is unacceptable. It has revealed systernic failings in the Commission which have been tolerated for far too long. It was absolutely right that the Commission resigned en masse. The president of the Commission should leave as soon as reasonably and practically possible and a new president should take his place," he said.

While Conservative leader, William Hague, welcomed the proposals he demanded that Sir the two British EU commisPolitical Reporter

vented from being appointed to the new Commission.

"While I support the idea [that] those commissioners not directly implicated by the report should serve out their terms as an interim measure, there should be a total clear-out of the existing Commission and an entirely new set of commissioners appointed," he said. Mr Hague added that there was an "even bigger issue and a more important challenge" because it was time to change the whole structure which led the Commission and the EU "to do too

Individual countries, for example, should be able to control their fisheries while recognising the traditional rights of other countries. Replying, Mr Blair made clear that the majority of the irregularities mentioned in the report happened before his own Government was elected, adding: "Do we use these events as an excuse to in-Leon Brittan and Neil Kinnock, dulge in the anti-Europeanism

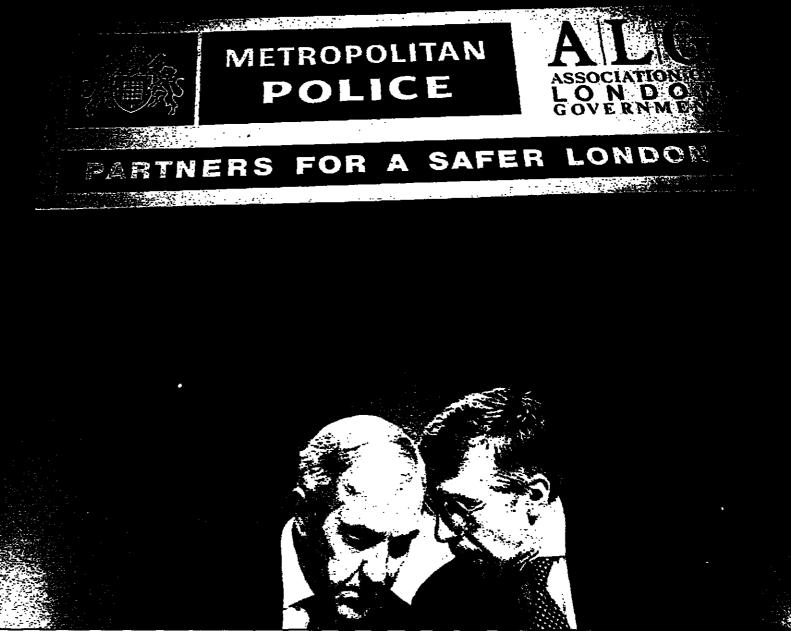
much and interfere too often".

Party or do we see it as an onportunity to drive through a reform agenda from a position of strength and influence in Britain's and Europe's interests?" John Major, the former Tory prime minister, referred to the "institutional problem" that had long existed in the EU. "The structure of the Union is such that the Commission is accountable to the Council of Ministers, but in practice the Council meets only irregularly,"

"Isn't one of the most important reforms, many years overdue, a clear-cut financial accountability by the Commission ideally to the member states of the EU or to a body that reports directly to the member states?"

Sir Edward Heath, another former Tory prime minister, said it was the "first time that the European Parliament has been prepared to act and act decisively.... Things will never be the same again."

Sir Edward supported the drive for reform but warned Mr Blair against trying to "run everything", because that would arouse resentment of the present Conservative among other EU nations.



The Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon, and the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, at 'Partners for a Safer London', a conference

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Police told to speed up millennium bug work

THE FOREIGN OFFICE, the TECHNOLOGY RAF and police forces across the UK have been told by the Government to improve dramatically their efforts to tackle

the millennium computer bug. Margaret Beckett, Leader of the House of Commons, said that while most public bodies had made great strides in preparing for the 2000 date change, some departments gave serious cause for concern.

With fewer than 300 days to go before the changeover, she revealed that United Kingdom embassies abroad and key Ministry of Defence agencies were not likely to be "millennium

QUESTIONS AND **ANSWERS**

Motoring costs

MORE THAN 2 million motorists who use fourstar petrol will have to pay between £200 and £400 to have their engines adjusted if they want to switch to a lead replacement fuel designed for car engines which cannot be converted to lead-free petrol, Transport minister John Reid said.

Shipping fees DUES PAID by shipping companies for the upkeep

of lighthouses, buoys and beacons are to remain unchanged at 41p per ton for 1999-2000, Transport minister Glenda Jackson

GM tests

TRIALS OF genetically modified oilseed rape have so far not revealed harmful side effects on weeds or other plant species, Environment minister Lord Whitty

PAUL WAUGH Political Correspondent

compliant" until as late as Mrs Beckett singled out the Foreign Office and the MoD as in need of major improvement as she published the first league tables showing the progress of

government departments and

The minister also attacked police forces for failure to draw up contingency plans should com-puters and other equipment be crippled by the date change. In her fifth quarterly state-

Ministers 'gone soft on fraud'

SOCIAL SECURITY BY PAUL WAUGH

THE GOVERNMENT was accused yesterday of "going soft" on benefit fraud by cutting funds to investigators and scaling down national campaigns to root out criminals. The Tories claimed that Al-

istair Darling, the Secretary of State for Social Security, had also deliberately understated by half the number of arrests for fraud in order to cover up his department's failures. Iain Duncan Smith, the Tory

social security spokesman, said that the Benefits Agency security investigation service (Basis) had had to cut back its operations because it was running out

Mr Darling had stated that there had been an average of 18 arrests per month from September to December by Basis's southern command. However, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency has now directly contradicted the minister claiming that the real figure was 36 arrests per month for the region. Investigators said that had plummeted to 16 in January because their budget ran out.

rations for the bug. Mrs Beckett announced that more than half of the 46 police forces in England

and Wales do not yet have business continuity plans in place. The cost of tackling the bug within all Whitehall departments stood at £420m, a rise of 2.5 per cent on the previous

The tables show that more than half of government de-partments had finished correction work on their computer systems. The worst performers were the Ministry of Defence Procurement Executive, the De-

the slowest of the armed services and won't be ready until November And the Foreign Office and the Royal Navy will not be bug-free until October Some agencies, such as the Vehicle Inspection Agency and Ordnance Survey, had slipped

Agency and the Home Office's Forensic Science Service, which

are scheduled to be compliant

only by December. The RAF is

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behind by up to 18 months from original plans to achieve full compliance. A Cabinet Office source said

some departments would be told they had to "do a damn sight more" to improve performance,

Strikes on Iraq MPs FROM all sides

fence Evaluation and Research

attacked military strikes on Iraq as Foreign Office Minister Derek Fatchett insisted that the RAF was operating under humanitarian obligations to protect no-fly zones. Leading the concern, David Winnick, Labour MP for Walsall North, urged the Government to accept a "precise limit" on bombing because "a bloodthirsty and murderous regime like Saddam's will not be brought down by bombing".

Awaiting trial MINISTERS WERE urged by

Anne McIntosh. Conservative MP for Vale of York, to introduce a legal time limit on how long people awaiting trial in England and Wales can be remanded in custody. Her Prevention of Delay in Trials Bill, which has crossparty support, would set a limit of 110 days between indictment and trial

Lords reform

MPS WERE poised to vote overwhelmingly for the third reading of House of Lords reform last night with Commons leader, Margaret Beckett, hailing the abolition of hereditaries' voting

THE HOUSE



rights as a "prize worth se curing in its own right". In future they would be free to serve "in just the same way and on just the same terms as all their fellow citizens" without a reserved place in the country's public service, she said.

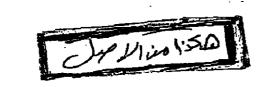
Today's Agenda

Commons, 9.30am for backbench debates: The Greening Government initiative: maritime and coastguard agency; health and safety at Northern Ireland soccer grounds; economic decline in suburban areas: regulation of water charges 2.30pm: Cabinet Office questions; Prime Minister's questions; Tax Credits Bill, remaining stages; short de-

Lords, 2.30pm: Backbench debates; the need to maintain respect for Parliament the situation in Nagorno-

bate on public services de-

livery in rural areas.



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Chris Burden testing one of the planes from his piece "when robots rule the world; the two minute airplane factory" which is to open in the Tate tomorrow

Andrew Buurme

Tate turns profit-making into art-form

ART AND science have finally BY DAVID LISTER come together, with mammon right in the middle.

The Tate Gallery is about to make one of its most radical breaks yet with the concept of what is art. The Tate's Duveen galleries, which used to hold Rodin's sculpture The Kiss, will from tomorrow house an assembly line making model

The assembly line will manufacture rubber-band powered model aeroplanes from tissue paper, plastic and balsa wood parts. The planes will come off the production line at the rate of one every two minutes, fly up, circle and descend. Twenty-five thousand will be produced over the four-month run of the exhibition.

free to fly them from the steps of the gallery. The exhibition "When Ro-

bots Rule: The Two-Minute Airplane Factory" is the work of the 52-year-old American artist and painted in the morning. An Chris Burden, whose aim is to demystify science.

But is it art? Most certainly. says the Tate curator Frances Morris. "At the end of the century you are free to examine the great questions without pro-

a free spirit. And there is a dark side being explored. Aeroplanes are liberating. But they are also instruments of mass destruction. It won't take you long before a work like this begins to echo the Blitz: dozens of planes cascading from the front steps of the Tate on to the Jackson Pollock ticket-buyers." Chris Burden says: "I want

processes. Do you know how your telephone or television works? What I really want is for this exhibition to be a real to land on the gallery floor, model of industrial capitalism. makes a product. We are selling the product for 25. Then Each will be on sale to the comes a magic moment when public at £5. And visitors will be every plane you sell makes a profit. And that's art too. It's beautiful." He added: "Artists and scientists used to be the same people; you looked through your telescope at night astronaut in America said recently that Nasa had made a very great error. They should have sent painters and musicians to simply look out of the window and digest what it means to go into outer space."

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Eton pupil died in 'fainting game'

AN ETON College pupil died By KATHY MARKS when he hanged himself in a "fainting game" that was played virtually every night between suppertime and prayers at the private school, an inquest heard yesterday.

The inquest recorded a verdict of misadventure on Nicholas Taylor, 15, of Esher, Surrey, who was found hanging from a dressing gown cord in his room last month.

Nicholas's friends told the East Berkshire coroner, Robert Wilson, that they had seen groups of boys playing the game - which involved tying lig-atures around each other's necks to make them faint - hundreds of times.

The pupil who discovered his body said that Nicholas had been "fainted" by friends almost every night, "It was just something to do," said the boy, who cannot be named for legal rea-

from it when we came round." A post-mortem examination concluded that Nicholas died of asphyxia in his room at the care, but there is only so much school, where pupils include Princes William and Harry:

His parents, Malcolm and Liz Taylor, attended the inquest at the Guildhall, Windsor, but were too upset to speak. Mr Wilson said be had strug-

gled to understand what had gone through Nicholas's mind.
"I have been in this court for 28 years and I thought I had heard everything," he said,

This fainting game was taking place between boys who are some of the cream of our society, who are probably also of above average intelligence. Why? What words spring to mind - crazy mad stupid?"

"faint" himself, but had no intention of taking his own life. He added: "I find it difficult to criticise Eton College. Yes, they had an absolute duty of

"I shall go away; the boys will go back to college and the college will return to its normal self. The incident will be put behind everyone, save Mr and Mrs Taylor, who have lost a son

in tragic circumstances." One of Nicholas's friends said: "There were about six or seven faintings each evening." Other pupils said that

ticular pleasure in the game when he was under pressure. The housemaster of Beldwins Bec. Robert Topham, said the game had been kept a secret from school authorities: "It is almost a general rule that a

Nicholas seemed to take par-

that Nicholas had tried to clever boy who does not want to get caught may well not get caught doing something that may be inappropriate or wrong," he said

Another of Nicholas's friends said Nicholas had tried to perform it on himself on a previous occasion: "Nick was standing by the door with my dressing gown cord," he said "He said: If no one is going to do it to me, then I'll do it to myself ' He put the dressing gown cord around his neck."

Another boy said that the person being "fainted" would tap on someone's thigh as the cord was pulled. When he stopped tapping, that was the signal for them to stop.

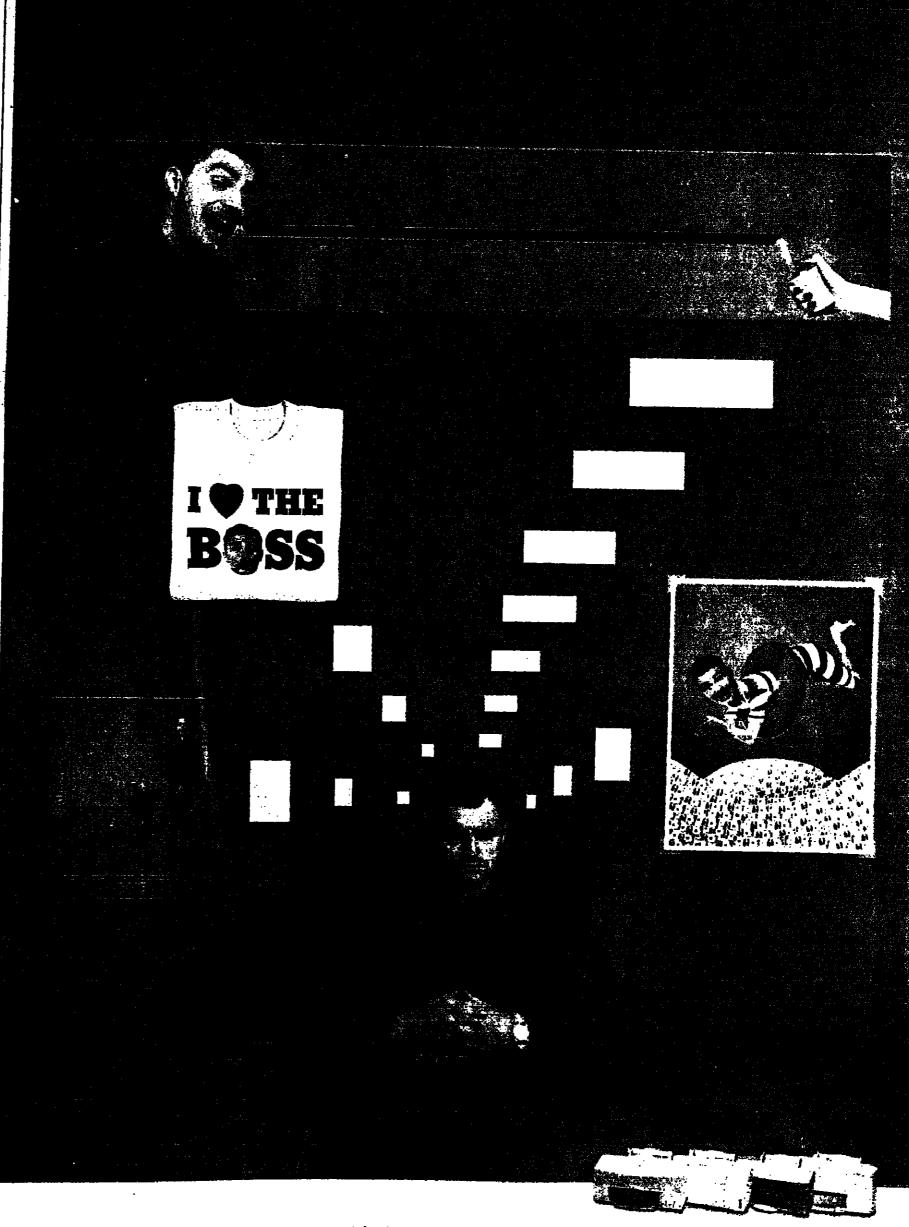
Describing versions of the game, he said: "If you hug someone really hard and then they stand up, all the blood rushes to their head and they can faint that way'

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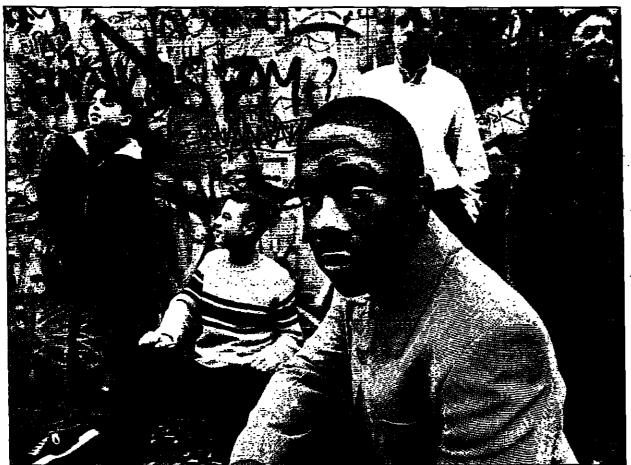


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YOU AND CANON CAN. Parenting: Research stresses importance of father-son relationships, as number of babies conceived inside marriage falls



e of the participants in the survey, which found emotional support from father figures is crucial to boys

Boys are suffering from 'Dad Deficit'

BOYS WITH low self-esteem BY CLARE GARNER suffer from "Dad Deficit" - a low level of emotional support from their fathers, according to

a survey published yesterday. Lack of paternal involvement is linked to a son's poor opinion of himself, his "antischool" attitudes and a tendency to get into trouble with the police, the nationwide survey of 1,400 boys between the ages of 13 and 19 indicated.

However, it is unclear which comes first - the low selfesteem or the "Dad Deficit". Independent research suggests that fathers find it easier to be close to sons who they perceive as successful and that their increased interest feeds into the son's confidence.

fathers and sons by how much time they spend together, how much interest the father pays to the son's schoolwork, and to what extent the father is willing to talk through the son's

At one end of the scale was the "Dad Deficit" (DD) and, at the other extreme, the "Highly Involved Man" (HIM), whose supportive influence proved sproportionately positive.

HIM fathering was as effec-tive regardless of whether the man lived at home or was the biological father.

Adrienne Katz, the author of the study, "Leading Lads", wants to encourage men who come into contact with boys, be

workers or sports coaches, to be more aware of their respousibility. "Men don't seem to understand the power of their be felt most keenly by those input," she said yesterday. "Boys are much less likely to turn to a friend than girls and so they need emotional support from the family. If a father models behaviour which never

talks about feelings, it is hard for a boy to seek help if he's de-pressed or troubled." The study showed that HIM fathering protects against depression and even suicide. According to the Samaritans. suicide attempts by young men

in the past 10 years. In 1996, 547 young men took their lives, compared with 157

have increased by 118 per cent

One of the most striking findings of the "Leading Lads" study was the extent to which boys put up barriers to avoid getting help. Rowever, boys with highly involved fathers were less likely than "Dad Deficit" sons to believe that boys are expected to cope with problems on their own.

man should act and what boys do or do not do were found to boys with the poorest selfimage. They are also most likely to have fathers who tell

them, "boys don't cry". Boys are inclined to protect their parents by keeping the problems to themselves. They know that their fathers want to be proud of them and believe that to tell them they are not coping would be to let them

As one interviewee. Danny Evans, 17, from north London, put it: "Boys have a secret secand life on the inside and a shell outside... Every father wants to be proud of his son, enforcing definitions of what these child ren should be - and it's doing harm. Some people are dying inside but too scared to admit it to themselves.

As the "Leading Lads" survey was conducted only over one year it was unable to establish whether there is a causal link between low self-

Unmarried conceive half of all babies

HALF OF all conceptions now By LINUS GREGORIADIS take place outside marriage, compared with just over a third in 1986, according to government statistics published

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that out of just under 800,000 women who conceived in England and Wales in 1997, 400,000 were unmarried. In 1986, by comparison, 305,000 conceptions out of a total of 819,000 took place outside

ceptions per thousand girls aged 13-15, compared with 9.4 per thousand in 1996. Overall, teenage conception rates fell by 1 per cent over the same period, according to the spring issue of Population Trends, the publication of the ONS.

Despite this fall, the figures show that the United Kingdom has the highest number of births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 out of eight European countries studied by the ONS. In 1997 there were 30 births

per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in the UK, compared with 21 per 1,000 in Portugal and 17 per 1,000 in the Republic of Ireland. The report shows a large increase in the number of women over 35 conceiving in the

period since 1991. In 1997 there were 41.2 con-

35-39, and 8.7 conceptions per

1,000 among women aged 40 and over - the only two age groups to register an increase in fertility rates since 1996.

Karen Dunnell, co-editor of the report, said she thought the rise in conceptions was the result of improved educational

She said: "The proportion of women who gain educational qualifications is rising, and their economic activity rates Under-age pregnancies fell are rising relative to young by 5 per cent in 1997 to 8.9 con-men's - this is probably one of

The report also found that two-thirds of total conceptions outside marriage resulted in motherhood, compared with more than 90 per cent of con-

ceptions within marriage. The number of people cohabiting in England and Wales will double by 2021, according to the ONS. About 1.56 million unmarried couples were living together in 1996, a figure expected to rise to nearly 3 mil-

lion within 25 years. The ONS estimates the most dramatic increase in numbers of cohabiting couples will take place among the over-35s. It is estimated that by 2006 less than

half of all adults will be married. Divorce rates dropped in 1997, with 146,339 decrees absolute in England and Wales, ceptions per 1,000 women aged 6.6 per cent fewer than in 1996.

John Peel wins top radio award

ONE OF Radio 4's most con- BY PAUL MCCANN troversial new programmes re-ceived an award yesterday when John Peel was named radio broadcaster of the year by the Television and Radio Industries Club.

Peel, 60, who received an OBE for services to broadcasting last year, won the award for his Saturday morning programme Home Truths. The programme, a light-hearted look at domestic life, was slated by critics of Radio 4's new schedule as a programme "about nothing" when it launched last year

"I am jolly pleased to have won," Peel said at the award ceremony in London yesterday.

Media Editor

the thought of a Radio 1 DJ coming over to Radio 4."

Another winner was Trevor McDonald who was named newscaster of the year for his work on ITN's now-defunct News at Ten programme.

In his acceptance speech McDonald criticised Channel 5 for moving its evening news to 6pm and running an advertising campaign claiming that his new 6.30 ITV bulletin repeated Channel 5's stories.

Johnny Vaughan, presenter of The Big Breakfast, was named commercial television "Initially the programme broadcaster of the year, while was cited as a classic example. The Big Breakfust itself was of Radio 4 'dumbing down'. I named Channel 4 programme think there was a sharp intake of the year.

STEVE RICHARDS

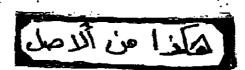


The politics of Europe are now almost impossible to control



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Wednesday 1: March 1909

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graph of the delicer RICHARDS The politics of Europe are now almost impossible to control SELLI KILLIN PAGES

Plan to cure fear of maths

at school

TEACHERS SHOULD organise desks in a U-shape and sing Education Editor their five-year-olds, according to new government guidelines on how to teach maths.

More mental arithmetic and fewer calculators form the centrepiece of plans to banish the fear of maths and turn Britain into a more numerate nation.

The 117-page guidance represents the most detailed government advice ever sent to schools on maths teaching methods. From September a new daily numeracy hour will be introduced in primary schools.

Even the arrangement of the furniture is important, the document suggests. It proposes placing desks in a U-shape with the weakest children sitting in the centre of the U.

The guidelines suggest that four and five-year-olds in reception classes might sing Fine Little Speckled Frogs before counting frogs and lily pads in the sand and water trays.

Yesterday's document says teachers should spend the first five or 10 minutes of the numeracy hour on oral work and mental arithmetic, the next 30 or 40 minutes on a new topic or practising an old one, and the last 10 to 15 minutes summing up to the whole class. During the mental arith-

metic sessions pupils might play a number game in which they are asked to give examples of a number one less than a multiple of five, or a calculation with the answer 12.

Pupils should have the mental arithmetic skills to work out different ways of answering questions such as 81 minus 26 or 5 per cent of £3000.

Calculators, the document says, should not normally be used for under-eights but older children should be taught how best to use these "powerful and efficient tools".

The guidelines advise teachers to spend as much time as possible teaching and questioning the whole class instead of dividing them into groups.

Mr Blunkett told a London conference yesterday: "Too many people in Britain say with almost a badge of pride that they never did understand maths properly. Yet it is essential in everyday life and to the life of our economy. Dealing with figures should be just as important as the ability to read, yet maths is sometimes the poor relation. We want to promote a 'can-do' attitude towards maths across the community."

Tony Blair announced that next year will be Maths Year 2000, and Carol Vorderman, the mental arithmetic expert from Channel 4's Countdown programme has agreed to give the initiative her backing.

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, said that "in principle the maths hour represents sound educational practice" but warned against over prescription. "Schools already succeeding

should not be compelled to turn their maths teaching upside-down to accommodate the bureaucrats at the Department for Education and Employment who, once again, appear to be rampaging out of control."

COUNTING ON BRAIN POWER

Mental arithmetic strategies for 11-year-olds: Use related facts and doubling:

Explain how to find sixths and twelfths by halving ■ one-twelfth of 300 is 25.

(one-third of 300 is 100, half is 50, half again is 25)

Continue to multiply a two-digit number by a single-digit number, multiplying the tens first: $= 86 \times 7 = (80 \times 7) + (6 \times 7)$

= 560 + 42= 602

> 10% 20% 30%

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£1m deal tempts nuns to evict carer



Josephine Cregan, who risks losing her job and home at St Michael's Convent in in south London

A "CARING" order of Irish nuns By BARRIE CLEMENT has chosen today - St Patrick's Day - for an act that is apparently lacking in charity to one of their compatriots.

The Poor Servants of the Mother of God are seeking an eviction order at Lambeth County Court, in south London, against arguably one of their most taithful servants.

If they are successful, Josephine Cregan, who has been a care worker for the order for 20 years, will have to leave her tied cottage in Streatham, south London, because the nuns are selling their residential home for people with learning difficulties.

The site is likely to fetch more than film, thus turning the Poor Servants of the Mother of God into the "Comfortably Off Servants of the Mother of God, as Frank Minal, an official with the GMB general workers' union, puts it.

Ms Cregan, 43, was first offered statutory minimum redundancy pay of £4,180 - 8 figure which was increased by eight week's pay - £1,760 - after the intervention of the GMB. It fore today's hearing.

Labour Editor

is understood that it was then raised by £3,000, and yesterday by a further £1,000 after the involvement of The Independent. Thus, after two decades of look ing after disadvantaged people for the nuns, Ms Cregan could lose her job and her home, with

£10,000 compensation. "I was offered another job," said Ms Cregan, "but it was on less money and with no accommodation. I have given my life to the order. I think I've

been treated very badly." Letters to Ms Cregan from the order give her notice to quit and remind her that her contract states that her accommodation lasts only as long as the job.

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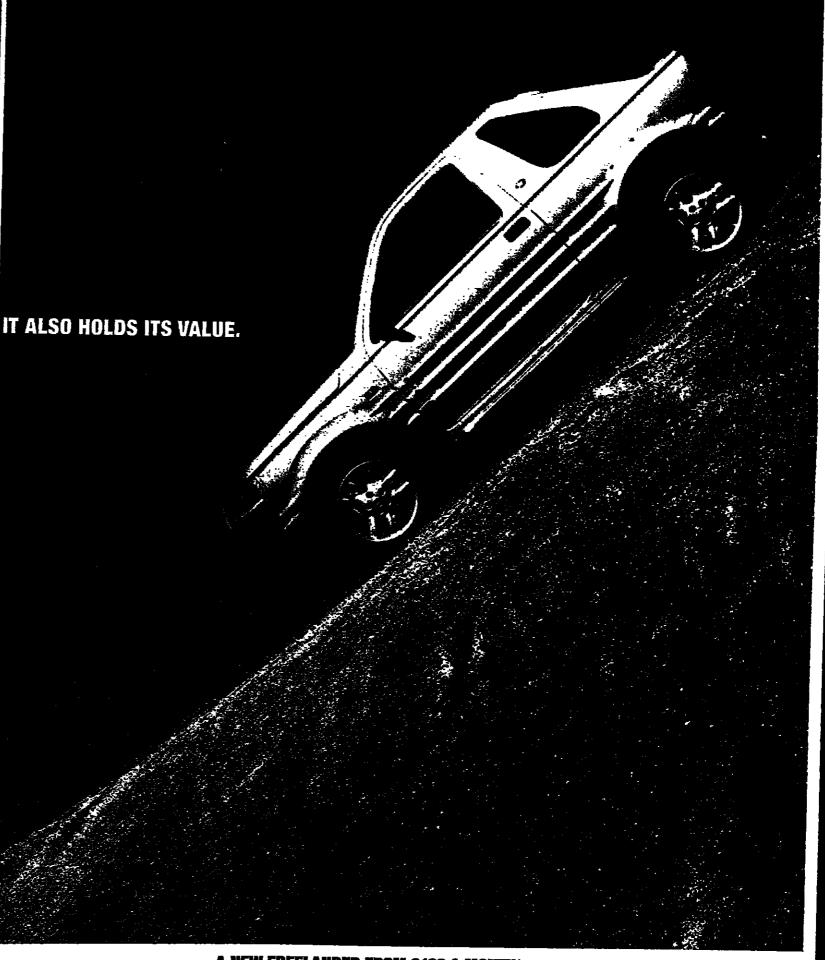
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A spokesman for the order's solicitors said Ms Cregan had been offered another job and temporary accommoda-tion but she had refused. He said she was asking for a "five figure" redundancy payment which no charity could countenance. Every effort would be made to reach a settlement be-



A NEW FREELANDER FROM £199 A MONTH:

Glass's Guide (February 1999), no other 4x4 holds its than a Freelander. And that's not just because it's made r. Nor is it just because of the way it combines car-like n astonishing off-road capabilities, provided in part by Hill Descent Control technology^a (see picture). the comprehensive 3 year warranty.44 It's also because

ility (ogle picture). in fact that it drove off with What Car? magazine's

ar" award last year. Unheard of for a 4x4.

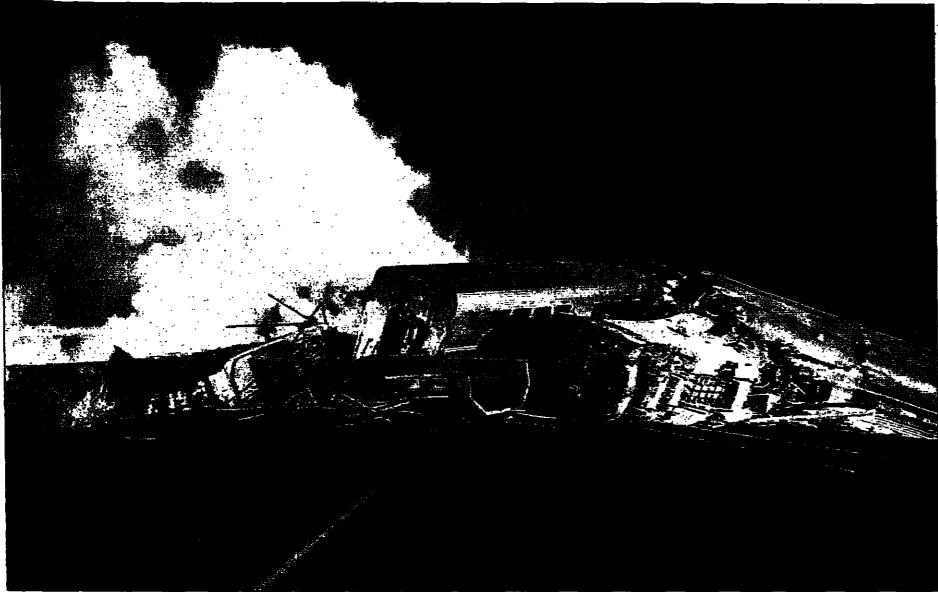
e it holds its value so well, monthly repayments to ter are unexpectedly low (raise eyebrows at panel).

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Rescue workers searching wreckage from the train after it collided with a truck on a level crossing in Illinois. Ten passengers were unaccounted for John Zich/EPA

Thirteen die in US train crash

RESCUE WORKERS were yesterday searching the wreckage of an Amtrak passenger train that collided with a lorry carrying steel, killing at least 13 people. Another 100 were in-

jured, some seriously. The collision occurred on Monday night at a level crossing in Illinois, 50 miles south of Chicago. Many of those killed and injured were settling into their beds in a sleeper car, near the head of the train that was making the overnight iourney from Chicago to New Orleans. The impact sent car-

By DAVID USBORNE in New York

riages and engines careening off the tracks. Some carriages were concertinged to a fraction of their size and one of the engines was split in two.

"All of a sudden, everything just started crashing and catching on fire and people hollering and running. It was awful, said Blanche Jones, one of the passengers. "We were trying to get out. We couldn't find a way out. That was the most devastating thing of all."

Working overnight, emergency crews pulled 13 bodies from the train, called City of New Orleans, Officials warned, however, that of the 216 who had 10 were still missing. By morning, "empty" had been spraypainted on those carriages free

Amtrak is bedevilled by problems at level crossings. There are about 250,000 of them on its tracks across the counaccidents reported in 1997,

about half were the result of col- the train saw the lorry, he still lisions with motor vehicles. This crossing did have lights

and barriers and officials were however, that of the 216 who had been aboard the train, another whether they were working properly on Monday. The lorry had just left a steel plant nearby. Its cab was still intact and the driver survived the crash,

The train, which had 16 carriages in all, mostly doubledecker passenger cars, would normally have been travelling try, and not all are equipped at about 80mph along the with barriers. Of the 245 Amtrak stretch of track where the accident occurred. If the driver of which will begin serving its

would have needed at least 10.000ft to halt the train.

Rescue workers were hampered during the night by thick smoke from fires in one of the carriages and one of the engines. Officials said 101 passengers and crew were taken to nearby hospitals for treatment. Of those, 11 were listed in critical condition yesterday,

and 19 in serious condition.

Only last week, Amtrak unveiled a new high-speed train, modelled on the French TGV. bridge pier. Forty seven people

north-east corridor between Washington and Boston this autumn. The train will travel at speeds of more than 150mph, and Amtrak has been at pains to underline its safety.

Amtrak has struggled for years with low budgets and a patchy safety image. Its worst accident happened in September 1993, when a train en route from New Orleans to Los Angeles plunged into a river in southern Alabama after a barge struck and destroyed a died in the accident.

'Tiger state' rescue plan loses its way

THE STATE of Madhya Pradesh BY PETER POPHAM is India's Great Outdoors: the in New Delhi geographical heart of the country, where you can drive for hours through sparsely populated and relatively unspoiled

In the middle of the state is the 1,000sq km Kanha National Park, where Kipling set the Jungle Book. And Shere Khan's descendants are still numerous here; the state has more than 900 tigers in the wild, about onethird of the Indian total and perhaps one-fifth of all the remaining wild tigers in the

But according to a report reased yesterday in Delhi by the Agency (EIA), a London-based non-governmental organisa-tion, that heritage is being frittered away at a terrifying rate.

The enemies are the tiger's usual adversaries: poachers supplying the oriental medicine trade in the Far East; industrialists building plants to strip out what remain of the state's natural resources; corrupt officials, winking at large-scale llegal logging.

This is the sad tale not only across India but also in the other "range states" where tigers survive in the wild, including Sumatra, Thailand and Russian Siberia, But the EIA chose to highlight Madhya Pradesh because in 1994 the state government, prompted by a vigorous minister of the environment with a constituency here, decided to name it "the Tiger State". The animal would be a symbol of efforts to conserve the natural resources.

At the outset much was promised. A "tiger state committee" was set up to improve the performance of the wildlife wardens. A "tiger cell" headed by a highly motivated inspector of police, Mr Rajgopal, cracked down on poachers and traders.

in New Delhi

Five years on, however, the EIA judgement is that "what started as a positive and enthusiastic initiative has been exposed as nothing more than a public-relations exercise". The state government, according to the report's authors, is "bent on exploiting its remaining natural resources to the detriment of the tiger, the forests, and the people who depend on them".

The bold initiatives have run into the sand. Inspector Rajgopal, too effective for his own good, has been transferred. The only recommendation of the tiger committee to have been implemented was putting a fax machine into the wildlife wardens' office. The fundraising Tiger State Foundation Society has amassed a grand total of 35,000 rupees - about £500. The report says: "It is not known what this money has been used for."

Meanwhile, the abuses flourish. A diamond mine operated by the national government near the border of Panna Tiger Reserve pumps solid waste and slurry from the mine into streams. A natural corridor between two reserves, vital for the tigers' genetic resilience, has been put at risk by a huge timber fraud: 300,000 apparently healthy sal trees have been felled after it was claimed that a beetle epidemic was raging. Tigers continue to be poached. supplying a trade which, the report says, "is more organised than ever before".

Amidst the gloom, Dave Currie, founding director of the EIA, identified one chink of light: there has been a change of attitude at the level of the Indian central government. "There is now utter acceptance at central government level of the seriousness of the Mr Rajgopal believed one tiger crisis. That is a very major per week was being killed in the change, and the first step tostate, and one leopard per day. wards addressing it," he said.



ger state' Zimbabwe loses battalion as Congo war spreads cue plan

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lost a battalion of between 80 in Johannesburg and 150 men in the war in Congo, where foreign-backed rebels are fighting to overthrow the regime of President Laurent Kabila, The reports drew a stiff denial from Harare, which has been militarily involved since the beginning of the eight-

month-old conflict in the former

However, the claim that Zim-

ZIMBABWE IS reported to have BY ALEX DUVAL SMITH

babwe has lost so many troops in weekend fighting near the southern town of Kabinda will come as a serious blow to President Robert Mugabe. At home, his support for Pres-

ident Kabila is seen as costly and self-serving. The fight over who will con-Congo - a country the size of

dent Kabila and his allies in Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia and Chad against Tutsi rebels supported by Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

Hutu guerrillas from Rwanda and Burundi and Mai-Mai warriors drawn from a mixture of Bantu tribes are also fighting the Tutsi rebels.

President Kabila, sensing trol the Democratic Republic of that he is losing international sympathy, was reported to have

damned" in Washington. Edward von Kloberg, whose task will be to swing United States opinion away from the Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni. was hired by President Kabila

\$500,000 (£312,000). Mr Von Kloberg's previous clients have included the late Romanian dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu and the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein. He also ad-

vised Zaire's former dictator southern Africa. Critics say Mobutu Sese Seko, whom Mr they are only defending their Kabila overthrew in 1997.

In a statement, Mr Von Kloberg said: "Mr Kabila, like his predecessor, Mr Mobutu, is now struggling to keep togethfor a reported annual fee of er a country the size of Western Europe with more than 400 ethnic groups and dialects and nearly 50 million people."

President Kabila's allies claim they are preventing the "Balkanisation" of central and own business interests.

Meanwhile, the conflict appeared to have spilt over into a ninth country yesterday as it was reported that up to 7,000 refugees from Congo had arrived in Zambia.

The country has a 600-mile border with Congo. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said some 7,000 people had crossed the bor-

March, Yesterday it said 900 had agency, Misna, reported that arrived in the space of one hour - robels last week massacred

Zambia was previously the only country with an extensive land border not to be involved in the war. Last week, however, it admitted it had allowed fuel supplies to reach President Kabila's forces. It said these

have now been stopped. Meanwhile, the only organisation continuing to monitor human rights in Congo, the

more than 100 civilians in the eastern province of Sud-Kiva.

Misna said the rebels massacred civilians in several villages including Mazoco. Lutunda, Kenge, Lulimba and Kabukungu, and in two districts of Kamituga. The attacks were denied by the rebels' military chief, Commander Jean-Pierre Ondekane

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Serbs stall at talks and call West's bluff

AH, THOSE teeth. And that BY ROBERT FISK smile. Even the grey suit glimmered in the evening light. A bit. like Liberace, but Milan Milutinovic's smile, glimpsed between the forests of television cameras and heaving pressmen, went on just a little bit too long; like his speech, repeated over and over as be marched towards his official car in the rue Kleber. "We are ready to sign a political agreement, but ...

On Monday, the first day of the reconvened Paris talks on the future of Kosovo, the ethnic Albanians had agreed to an international peace plan granting them autonomy but not independence, and the introduction of Nato troops on the ground to ensure observance

by all sides Yesterday, however, the "buts" came thick and fast as the bodyguards and journalists and policemen fought each other for space in the great amoeba-like trail of Serbia's president. But, of course, the Kosovo Albanians had to accept all of Serbia's "complaints". Yes, the Serbs were ready for implementation. But only for the political agreement. And the entry of 38,000 Nato troops to oversee the new peace?"

hitch in strategy - faded just a little. "Yes, it's rejected." he muttered. "Our people clearly said what they think about it." And there we had it - predictably, another big "no" from Slobodan Milosevic. Equally predictably, Nato threats will follow. Indeed, even as the Serbs and Albanians were packing up for the night, there were rumonrs that Major-General Robin Cook would soon be rein Paris



Milatinovic: 'It's rejected'

turning to Paris to set yet more deadlines and propose more possible air strikes.

General Cook's ADC, Captain Hubert Vedrine, the French Foreign Minister, was already accusing the Serbs of backtracking. "The very last moment has not yet come." he told the National Assembly yesterday in words that might have been scripted by his British superior officer. "The last word has not really been uttered. But the moment of truth is not far." The Kosovars pre-The smile didn't fade for a ferred to remain silent. Wisely second. But Mr Milutinovic's so. They had, after all, anvoice - like that of an army of nounced their preparedness to

They will sign the Bible and the Koran if you ask them now," a Serb journalist confided at the police barrier in the rue Kleber. "Milosevic's guys have handed out a 20-page document of 'complaints' that tears up the original agreement." And so they had. The Serbs didn't like the judicial system proposed for Kosovo and supposedly agreed by all at last

They didn't want Kosovo to have its own president. But if only the Kosovars would accept those 20 pages of amendments, the Serbs would go along with the revised (and thus worthless) "political agreement".

What we don't know however is what the real generals are thinking. Take Dragoljub Ojdanic, for example, the Yugoslav chief of staff. Or Rade Markovic, the head of Serbia's secret police. They are not part of the Serb delegation in Paris; they remain behind in Belgrade as part of Mr Milosevic's decreasing inner circle. Are they advising their master that Nato is still bluffing? Or are they recommending a little bombing from Nato to stiffen the Serbian backbone - and perhaps provide a get-out clause for Milosevic to hand over Kosovo? Or are they - and here's the rub assuring their leader that the Yugoslav air force might be able, in the event of a Nato offensive, to do a little Argentinestyle damage to Nato's Adriatic

In the rue Kleber, they were even saying that the whole panjandrum might close down as soon as tonight, leaving a few days for General Cook and more of their famous threats and persuade an American -Albright, perhaps - to make "one last journey for peace" to Belgrade. As we all know, the Americans are ready to shout "chocks away". And the British too, up to a point. But the Germans and the Italians and the French, and just about everybody else, is beginning to won-

bombs start to fall. No wonder Mr Milutinovic

der what happens after the



British members of Nato's extraction force in Macedonia patrol at Skopje yesterday as they wait for a peace mission to Kosovo

Kosovo dissidents reject deal

THE KOSOVO Albanians' agree- BY EMMA DALY Captain Vedrine to make some ment to the Western peace in Ljubovac plan for the province was Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)

denounced the deal. "It is easy for them to accept a compromise and present that as their big victory, because it was not their friends who were killed and whose last message was that we should fight to the end," said a statement from the KLA zone of Podujevo.

The Podujevo region, close to the border with Serbia proper, is under the command of

ternational monitoring mission in Kosovo, that he would never disarm his forces, even though the peace deal required it.

Yugoslav troops continued their military offensive in Kosovo yesterday, concentrating on the triangle of land between Vucitrn, Srbica and Mitrovica. and forcing KLA rebels to withdraw from the area. After they captured the village of Vrbnica, huge plumes of smoke were vis-

dreds of civilians began the

into the villages of Ljubovac, Os-

a drive westwards, aimed at

subduing the KLA heartlands

on the border with Albania.

The action threatens dozens of

Albanian villages in the east of Kosovo and yesterday huntrek west out to Srbica and Glogovac, where they hope to Their fears were heightened

by reports that a column of Serbian armoured vehicles, known in Albanian as

ible as buildings were set including seven T-72 tanks, had the biting wind in brightly

had moved into Skenderaj," said Basri Nura, who was driving a tractor pulling a trailer in which his mother and three sisters huddled under an old, grey blanket. Several more tractors

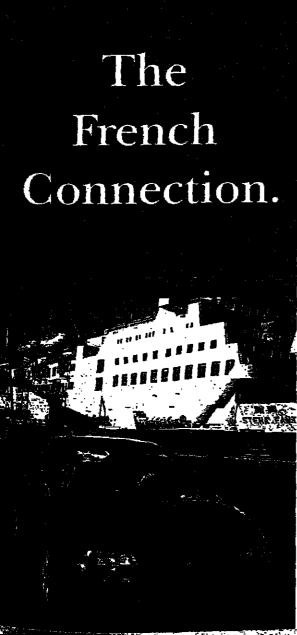
moved along the muddy road. past groups of people walking out. Elheme Bardigi and two friends were moving their 15 children to a safer village, the children bundled up against

ablaze. Tank shells crashed already moved into Srbica, coloured jackets, hats and gumboots. Mrs Bardiqi said: "We wanted to escape with the children

> because they were frightened - they were crying when they heard the shelling." The rebel fighters fear that the civilians fleeing their villages may end up trapped if the Yugoslav tanks in Srbica

join the pincer movement. "We are trying to let the civilians know it |Srbica| is not a good situation [for them]." said one fighter. "But we have

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Seventh **IOC** man may be sacked

By Paul Lashmar

THE OLYMPIC movement's second most powerful figure may face expulsion when the International Olympic Committee begins its emergency meeting in Switzerland today.

The IOC's investigating team has been examining new evidence against Un Yong Kim, a South Korean. He would be the seventh member upon whose sacking the full com-mittee will decide.

The inquiry commission, headed by the vice-president Dick Pound, of Canada, met yesterday after receiving "some letters and documents". Until the Salt Lake City bribery scandal broke last December, Mr Kim, 67, was expected to take over in 2001 from the president, Juan Samaranch.

In Mr Pound's second report, published last week, there were three allegations against Mr Kim. According to the report, he had elicited favours for two of his children and a Russian teenager from the Salt Lake City committee which was bidding for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games. The commission recommended that Mr Kim received "the most serious of warnings".

Six other members were recommended for expulsion: Agustin Arroyo of Ecuador, Jean-Claude Ganga of Congo. Zein El Abdin Abdel Gadir of Sudan, Lamine Keita of Mali. Sergio Santander of Chile and Samoa's Paul Wallwork

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Rain, rain, rain all winter – and it could last 20 years

IN THE Pacific North-west, they are used to rain. It is what makes the forests lush and green. It is what keeps more Californians from upping sticks and moving there. Rain is what they know. Rain is what they can handle.

So when it rained uninterruptedly for almost the whole of February, the citizens of Oregon and Washington kept a brave face. When the weather forecasters pointed out that the rain has been relentless since early November, and threatens to stay that way until May, there were mur-murs of dismay, certainly, but nothing to upset the prevailing

Then, a few days ago, came the proverbial raindrop too far. A particularly ugly storm accompanied by high winds played havoc with the electricity supply, toppled trees knocked out the coffee service on a commuter ferry plying the thin strip of Puget Sound from Bainbridge Island to Seattle. Well, that was just too much. "Of course people com-

AMERICAN TIMES PACIFIC NORTH-WEST

plained," said Susan Harris-Huether, spokeswoman for Washington state's ferry services. "If they don't get their

And now North-westerners are venting their anguish in the only ways they know how - blaming the forces of evil in the world (California, mainly) and cracking jokes.

Like the one about the found it almost impossible to woman who visits Seattle and realises that it has not stopped raining for a week. So she stops a kid on the street and asks: "Hey, does it ever stop raining around here?" To which he answers: "I wouldn't

know. I'm only six."
The truth is, the region has gone through the wettest winter since records began. Barely one day in five has

been dry over the past three months. There have been mudslides and floods on the roads. Up in the Cascade mountains, they had to close down resorts while they spent two days digging chairlifts out

Most spectacularly, an oil tanker crashed ashore in southern Oregon a month ago, spilling around 70,000 gallons of oil, killing birds and threatening shellfish stocks. Because of the relentless storms, salvage crews have

stop the ship, the New Carisso, from drifting and causing more damage. Ten days ago, a huge tugboat tried to tow the wreckage and its remaining cargo of 130,000 gallons of oil offshore for a deep-sea burial. But one of the towing bridles snapped and the ship's carcass was washed back to shore. According to meteorolo-

gists, this winter could be the

harbinger of a general change

for the worse. The North-west is subject to weather movements called Pacific decadal oscillations, and a 20-year pe-

riod of relative dryness may be giving way to a wet period that is likely to last for just as long. On top of that is La Nina, the Pacific current pattern that pushed last year's Californian storms several hundred miles

Republicans have sought to lay the poor climate at the door of the Democratic state administration, saying a lot of "liberal hot air" has played havoc with the environment. And former governor Mike Lowry, for one, seems willing to accept the blame.

"Environmentalists like me want more wetlands," he said. "And I'm getting them right outside in the parking lot."

Some, of course, see divine intervention in all those rainclouds. Retribution, perhaps, for excessive exploitation of the beautiful landscape. Or, as the former Seattle deputy mayor Bob Royer sees it, God's scheme to put those uppity Californians in their place. "This is the only way to get all those newcomers to move back south," he said. ANDREW GUMBEL



WINNGPEP

New research can help you reduce the odds.

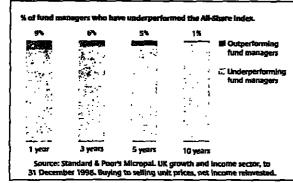
Trawling through the financial pages for your last PEP is a bit like entering a crowded bazaar with store holders shouting at you from all angles. Who do you buy from? The one who shouts the loudest or the one that 'promises' you the best deal?

Ideally, before making such a decision you'll want the added confidence and reassurance that can only come from a truly impartial and credible source. That's why we asked The WIM Company, one of the world's leading investment performance consultants, to shine an independent light on the key issues.

If you can spare five minutes to read their findings, we promise it will make the task of choosing your last PEP considerably easier. We start with a remarkable fact that has led to one of the biggest debates ever in the investment industry, and which triggered the research...

THE INDUSTRY'S BEST KEPT SECRET

Before we entered the PEP market, we looked at the hundreds of PEPs on offer and discovered that less than one in ten actively managed funds outperformed the FT-SE Actuaries' All-Share Index of the top 828 UK companies - the industry benchmark for performance.



'Tracker' funds, which simply track their chosen index by investing in all the companies that make it up, are not new. But before Virgin's high profile launch four years ago, trackers accounted for only a tiny part of the UK investment market. Why, you might ask?

A TRULY OBJECTIVE VIEW

It's this issue that we asked WM to consider. After all, the first decision you need to make when choosing your PEP is whether to go for a tracker fund or to try to find an active fund manager who can beat it.

WM studied the performance of funds in the UK Growth & Income sector over 20 years to the end of 1998. These funds can be directly compared with the FT-SE All-Share Index.



They found that in any five year period, active funds had around a one in four chance of outperforming a tracker. Over longer periods, they fared even worse.

These figures take into account annual management charges but not the initial charges levied by active funds. Allowing for all charges reduces the odds still further and it's easy to see

The average actively managed PEP has total charges over a five year period of 11.5% (source: Best PEP). Compare this with a typical tracker fund with no initial charge and a 1% annual management charge (just 5% over five years) and it becomes clear what a tough job an active manager has on his hands. He needs to outperform the market by 6.5% just to keep pace with a tracker!

BUT ARE ACTIVE FINDS A GAMBLE WORTH TAKING?

it would seem not. WM found, not surprisingly, that to give them a chance of outperforming trackers, active funds took on more risk. This resulted in wild fluctuations in performance which were not generally associated with higher returns. In WM's own words "active investors were not being rewarded for the extra risk."

THERE'S WORSE NEWS TO COME

Even so, many PEP investors are still willing to try and upset the odds by finding that elusive outperforming fund manager. And the generally accepted way of choosing is to look at a fund's past performance.

Virgin Direct Personal Financial Service Ltd is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority. The price of units and any Income from them can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount you invest. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. You can invest in a PEP right up until 5 April 1999 when they will attract the same tax benefits as the new individual Savings Account. All calls are recorded and monitored. "Source: Standard & Poor's Micropal, www.micropal.com, single investment, 6.3.95 to 22.2.99, buying to selling prices, gross income reinvested.

However, this is the area where WM's findings are most disturbing. They concluded that, as a whole, the top performing actively managed funds over a five year period had no more than a random chance of being the top performing funds over the following five year

What's more, the evidence suggested that the very poor performers actually had a better chance of being the stars of the future than the former stars themselves!

So what hope then is there for finding that elusive manager?

If your instinct is still to gamble, that's fine provided you're happy with the odds. If, however, you feel the risks of active management are just not worth it and trackers offer more for less, read

THE VIRGIN GROWTH PEP

- A proven approach to investment. By tracking the FT-SE All-Share Index, the Virgin Growth PEP has consistently remained among the top performing PEPs, month after month, year after year.
- 20% a year. Tax free. That's the average return earned by Virgin Growth PEP austomers who started investing when we launched four years ago".
- blower diarges than 97% of all other PEPs. No salesmen, no commission and no expensive fund managers means no initial charges whatsoever and an annual management charge of just 1%.

The market leader.

We now look after £1.4 billion on behalf of over 200,000 customers making the Virgin Growth PEP the most popular index tracking PEP in the UK.



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Forbes unveils presidency bid on the Net

THE MILLIONAIRE publisher BY MARY DEJEVSKY Steve Forbes launched his second campaign for the US presidency yesterday - on the Internet - and promised to wage a "new, information age campaign".

The <Forbes2000.com> website sprang into life shortly before 10am, after teasing visitors with a "stand-by" notice for the previous 12 hours. In a recorded message, Mr Forbes said: "Today, I'm happy to announce the beginning of my campaign and described it as "a national crusade to restore Ronald Reagan's vision of hope and prosperity for all Americans".

Practically all the presidential candidates (and many congressional candidates) have their own websites, but Mr Forbes is the first to use it for his declaration.

Boasting news of his campaign "first, fast and unfiltered", the website said that Mr function of taxation. Forbes was offering "a dramatic reform agenda to defend America's economy, security and values" and prepare every child to "compete and succeed in the information

age economy" Mr Forbes is the fourth Republican to announce formally a presidential bid, but another conservative, Gary Bauer, alsix have already made it clear ready hold that constituency

in Washington

cluding the two favourites, George W Bush and Elizabeth Dole. While these two have: outlined priorities and programmes that tend towards the Republican centre, Mr Forbes, 51, has moved, if anything, further to the right since his last campaign - coupling his former tax-cutting zeal with a firmer moral pitch.

Mr Forbes, who spent \$32m (£20m) on his last campaign, is a proponent of the idea of a "flat tax", which would set a single, low, income and sales tax rate. and abolish most concessions

In theory, this is designed to make the tax burden fairer, but its opponents argue variously that it would penalise the poor, require too high a basic tax rate to be attractive. and minimise the redistributive

A firmer moral dimension to his campaign could also dilute Mr Forbes' appeal, driving some supporters away and failing to attract new ones.

Even if taking the high moral ground gives a Republican candidate an advantage, candidates like the Christian that they are in the running, in- and are unlikely to cede it.

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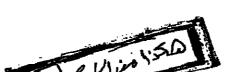
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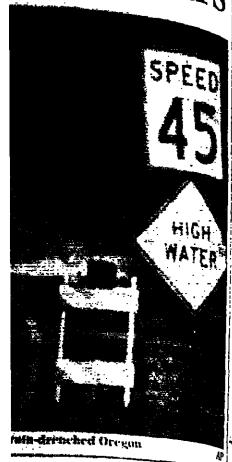
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BUSINESS REVIEW



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The 12-page Business Review, free every Wednesday

GM crop ban 'disastrous' for EU NOVARTIS. the Swiss life sciences group, warned yesterday

that a ban on genetically modified crops could destroy European farming. Wolfgang Samo, head of agribusiness, said the moratorium backed by environmental groups and the UK Conservative Party would have a "disastrous' effect. Novartis's 1998 net income was Sfr6.1bn (£2.6bn).

Tarmac nears £1.5bn demerger

TARMAC moved closer to a £1.5bn demerger of its building materials and construction divisions with plans to inject most of its £317m debt into the materials subsidiary. Chief executive Sir Neville Simms is to become chairman and chief executive of the construction company; the building materials group will be led by Roy Harrison.

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FTSE 350	2957,50	-1.90	-0.06	3024.90	2210.40	2,69
FTSE All Share	2862.31	-1.21	-0.04	2923.83	2143.53	2.73
FTSE SmallCap	2375.80	9.20	0.39	2793.80	1834,40	3.43
FTSE Fledgling	1290.20	3.90	0.30	1517.10	1045.20	4.24
FTSE AIM	858.30	-1.70	-0.20	1146.90	761.30	1.08
FTSE Eurotop 100	2907.97	11.51	0.40	3079.27	201B.15	2.06
FTSE Eurotop 300		3.24	0.26	1332.07	880.63	1.95
Dow Jones	9966.82	9.44	0.10	9970.15	7400.30	1.59
Nikkel	16072.82	293.22	1.86	17111.59	12787.90	0.88
Hang Seng	10911.25	74.39	0.69	11926.16	6544.79	3.27
Dax	5094.63	65.39	1.30	6217.83	3833.71	1.70
58P 500	1309.00	1.86	0.14	1307.54	923.32	1,23
Nasdaq	2449.35	17.86	0.74	2533.44	1357.09	0.28
forento 300	6623.60	14.20	0.22	7837.70	5320.90	1.60
Brazii Bovespa	10671.67	243.42	2.34	12339.14	4575.69	5.84
Belgium Bel20	3348.24	4.44	0.13	3713.21	2696_26	2.10
Amsterdam Exch	540.64	5.59	1.05	600.65	366.58	1.90
France CAC 40	4186.35	1.23	0.03	4404.94	2881.21	1.86
Milan MIB30	36806.00		-0.71	39170.00	24175.00	1.11
Madrid Ibex 35	10213.90	92.90	0.92	10989.80	6869.90	7.71
Irish Overali	5293.83	<u>-38.15</u>	-0.72	55 <u>81.7</u> 0	3732.57	1.54
S Korea Comp	601.83		1.66	<u>6</u> 51.95	277.37	0.36
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544	450	550
502		
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	at Spm. German money	market rates equal euro rate

3 month Yr chg 1 Year Yr chg 10 year Yr chg Long bond Yr chr.

5.42 -2.13 5.38 -2.15 4.49 -1.42 4.50 -1.34

5.00 -0.68 5.28 -0.50 5 10 0.44 5.47 0.39

0.19 -0.52 0.23 -0.44 1.88 0.12 2.98 0.62

nany 3.04 -0.47 3.03 -0.70 3.98 -0.90 4.96 -0.48

BOND YIELDS

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Thalland (bahts)

Source: Thomas Cook

Turkey (Trasi)

MONEY MARKET RATES

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Gald (S)	283,95	∙3.25	294 35	RPI	163.40	2.40	159,57	Mar

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Hong Kong (\$)

ireland (punts)

Indian (rupees)

Malta (lira)

1,4879 +0.40c 1.4079 Euro 0.9157 -17.77c 0.8571

5.06 -0.15 6.12 Base Rates 5.50 7.25 SOURCE BLOOMBERG ww.bloomberg.com/uk TOUDICE DATES

	OURIST	RAIES	
Australia (S)	2.4903	Mexican (nuevo peso)	14.3
Austria (schillings) 19.87	Netherlands (guilders)	3.190
Belgium (francs)	58.44	New Zealand (S)	2.933
Canada (S)	2.4032	Norway (kroner)	12.4
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8347	Portugal (escudos)	288.3
Denmark (kroner)	10.81	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.888
Finland (markka)	8.6382	Singapore (\$)	2.646
France (francs)	9.4987	South Africa (rands)	9.627
Germany (marks)	2.8425	Spain (pesetas)	240.2
Greece (drachma)	466.38	Sweden (kronor)	13.0

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breaks barrier

THE DOW 10,000 arrived yesterday writes David Usborne in New York. History was made and the feel-good American economy that has been powering stocks higher for the past four and a half years suddenly felt even better. Then, in the blink of an eye - or the pop of a champagne cork - it was gone again. The five-digit Dow was four digits again.

The breaking of the mythical barrier happened at 9.50am, just 20 minutes into the day's trading. All heads on the New York Stock Exchange floor turned to the flashing numbers and there it was: Industrial Average up 41.35 points at 10,001.12. There were cheers and applause until, just as quickly, the numbers began to sink back to the ninetynine hundreds.

The index, a composite of the share prices of 30 US blue-chip companies, has surged no less than 6,000

receive payouts

BY DAVID USBORNE in New York AND ANDREW GARFIELD in London

GOLDMAN SACHS' 13,000 staff are to be given shares worth on average \$360,000, when the firm goes public in May with a price tag of up to \$23.4bn, according to figures released by the Wall Street investment bank

The value of the shares being given to the firm's 221 partners holdings works out at \$52m on average, although the figure hides a wide disparity in holdings, with those of some individuals likely to be in the hundreds of millions.

The figures are included in the official filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission, which vets all public

offerings.
One of the biggest surprises is the level of basic salary of the top five partners of the firm, which was revealed for the first time yesterday as a mere \$600,000, although the figure does not include their substantial bonus payments.

The stock sale should be

worth up to \$3.45bn (£2.1bn) and account for as much as 14.7 per cent of the company. That will make it the second-largest initial public offering (IPO) in New York this decade, second to the \$4.4hn public offering in Conoco last October The sale will mark the 130-

year-old firm's second attempt at going public. Plans for an earlier share sale were abruptly shelved in September following turmoil in the financial markets and a sharp slump in In the SEC filing, Goldman

said it planned to sell as many as 69 million shares at \$40 to \$50 each. That would value the bank at \$23.4bn, about the same as JP Morgan. About 42 million shares will be sold by Goldman

Business Review, page 3

LONDON

Goldman Staff to Airbus to take £400m \$360,000 charge for black hole'

AIRBUS INDUSTRIE, the European aircraft manufacturer, is being forced to set aside around £400m to cover a "black hole" in its accounts relating to past losses on jet orders.

The disclosure came as it emerged that the four Airbus single corporate entity was now partners, including British Aero- unlikely to be completed before space, have formally applied to their governments for up to £2bn in launch aid for the proposed 600-seat superjumbo, the

share of Airbus, is thought to US fought a savage price war. in repayable launch funding. The other partners are Aérospa Aerospace of Germany and

BY MICHAEL HARRISON **Business Editor**

fident the ASXX programme could be launched by mid-2000. However, he indicated that the transformation of Airbus into a autumn next year, 18 months behind schedule.

The £400m provision is to cover losses on orders booked in the three years from 1995 to 1997 BAe, which has a 20 per cent when Airbus and Boeing of the

ported aircraft sales with a package of support measures tiale of France, Daimler-Benz including guarantees, spares and pilot training, but has not Noel Forgeard, chief execu- From now on it will shoulder a change into a conventional pubtive of Airbus, said he was con- much bigger share of these lic company, with shareholders it into service in 2005. Airbus be-

costs, and financing charges, at the time a sale is made. Mr Forgeard refused to dis-

close figures. But it is thought the partners have agreed to take £200m of the provision in the 1998 accounts, leaving the consortium nursing a loss of £120m. It has also taken has a £30m to £40m provision against a can-

celled order from the Philipnines. This means that, leaving aside provisions, Airbus as a consortium made a profit of about £40m last year. However, industry estimates of the underlying out exceptional charges and exchange-rate losses, range from £400m to £450m

and a proper balance sheet. However, progress on this and the exchange of valuations of partners' Airbus assets will not occur until Aérospatiale is pri-

vatised this summer. It will then

take a further year to complete

The A3XX, a double-decker aircraft capable seating 550 to 680 passengers, will cost \$10bn to develop and will sell for between \$213m and \$246m. Mr Forgeard said. Spending on the programme by the partners increases by 50 per cent this year,

Germany and Spain. The aim is to start marketing The tightening of Airbus's the A3XX to airlines at the end taken them as an upfront cost. accounting is in readiness for its of this year, launch the programme in mid-2000 and bring

development in Britain, France,

lieves there is demand for up to 1.400 such aircraft over the next

trary it is understood that British Airways remains a strong supporter of the A3XX and does not want to see any slippage in the timetable.

About one-third of the programme will be with risk and revenue-sharing partners outside the Airbus consortium. Onethird would come from the

bus is talking to include Fokker, Saab, Finmeccanica, Mitsubishi of Japan and Aerostructures Corporation of the US.

Mr Forgeard said he did not expect Boeing to launch a rival jet in advance of Airbus.

Shunned Unigate in | City hails public hostile Terranova bid | finance figures

UNIGATE yesterday launched BY NIGEL COPE the first hostile bid in the food sector for more than six years by tabling a £228.5m offer for Terranova Foods, the chilled foods company demerged from Hillsdown Holdings in October.

The cash offer, at 125p per share, was immediately rejected by Terranova management. It said the bid was "inadequate, opportunistic and fails to reflect the current value or future prospects". Terranova shares soared by 31p to 135.5p, indicating prospects for a higher bid.

Analysts said Unigate would have to raise its offer price to around 140p to 150p to secure victory. It is thought some of Terranova's institutions will be looking for a reasonable premium to the 140p price at which Terranova was demerged from Hillsdown last autumn

The bid will be seen as a test

Associate City Editor

of nerve for Sir Ross Buckland. chief executive of Unigate. He walked away from a £1.6bn bid for the whole of Hillsdown last year, having principally been interested in the chilled food operation. Over the weekend an attempt to gain an agreed deal failed when a 125p Unigate

approach was rejected. Yesterday Sir Ross said he had only been interested in the chilled food business last year, but Hillsdown's reluctance to sell it separately forced him to make

an offer for the whole company. Unigate, whose interests span dairy, chilled foods and distribution operations, said the deal had "compelling logic". It highlighted scope for cost savings and synergies, with Unigate adding its buying and distribu-

tion to Terranova's brands. It said Terranova's Buxted chickens would fit with its own Malton pig division. Unigate's Shape brand could be extended across Terranova's ready meal and sandwich ranges.

Analysts say there is scope for cost savings of at least £2.5m a year and that the deal could be earnings enhancing at up to 200p. Unigate is under pressure to use its £130m cash pile. This is the first hostile bid in

food since Torokins won control of Ranks Hovis McDougall in 1992. Other bidders could enter the ring for Terranova, with Tomkins a candidate. Sir Ross said: "Terranova

has insufficient scale to take advantage of the opportunities open to it. This deal offers certainty to shareholders." Unigate shares closed un-

changed at 410.5p.

were in such good shape last month, according to official figures yesterday, that analysts concluded the surplus in 1998-99 would be higher than Gordon Brown predicted in his Budget last week. The Public Sector Net Cash

Requirement (PSNCR) showed a surplus of £1.5bn in February, taking the cumulative surplus for the first 11 months of the financial year to £15.1bn. The Budget estimated the full-year surplus would be £5.2bn. Although March has tradi-

tionally seen a big deficit because of an end-of-year spending surge, this pattern has been less pronounced in recent years. Many analysts are therefore predicting a bigger surplus of £8-10bm.

downplayed these hopes yes

THE GOVERNMENT'S finances By DIANE COYLE Economics Editor

> terday, suggesting the pattern of public spending could be reverting to the traditional profile.

Q.

Even so, yesterday's figures clearly show the public sector's healthy financial position. Net. borrowing was in surplus by £1.1bn in February taking the cumulative total to £8.7bn compared with £3,3bn at the same stage last financial year.

Income tax receipts were buoyant in February thanks to self-assessment. But Customs & Excise receipts have fallen

since the new year. Government expenditure is accelerating as the year-end approaches, from April to February, running £6bn higher than However, the Treasury the first 11 months of 1997/98.

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

SAO PAULO

BRAZILIAN STOCKS climbed 2.5 BLUE CHIPS lost ground for the third day in succession. Footsie per cent to reach their highest eased 4.9 points to 6,201.9 after at level since before the currency one time sporting a 62.8 point gain. crisis last year. But supporting shares were more Sao Paulo's Bovespa index resilient with the mid cap index broke through the 10.000 barrier

After an 8.8 per cent rise on

The surge in share prices is

powered by increasing optimism

that Brazil's economy has begun

crisis which began seven months

its recovery from the currency

edging 0.8 higher to 5,519.7 and the for the first time since August. small cap rising 9.2 to 2,375.8. Although the market endured a Monday, the index has risen over generally featureless session, 11 per cent in two days. trading was again busy with share turnover topping 1.1 billion.

Colt Telecom, which led Monday's retreat, headed the blue chips' risers, rallying 56.5p to

● TOKYO

STOCKS surged through the 16,000 barrier for the first time since August last year on the back of foreign buying and upbeat

comments from the Bank of Japan. The Nikkei 225 closed up 1.86 per cent, or 293.22 points, at 16,072,82. Traders said foreign buyers were increasingly piling into the market as the yen rose against the dollar. Institutions were afraid of missing the effect of the rise, which boosts the value of dollar-denominated

portfolios. "The bear market that

began in December 1989 ended in

March 1999," said one analyst,

PARIS

ended marginally up 0.03 per cent at 4,186.35 as Wall Street tracked back. "Everyone was waiting for the Dow to hit 10,000 and when it did we saw a wave of sell orders." said one market-maker. Renault slumped 5.45 per cent

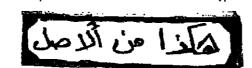
THE BLUE-CHIP CAC-40 index

amid selling by US clients worried about the risks of an alliance with Nissan. France Telecom closed down 1.77 per cent ahead of results today, dragging the CAC down 9 points. But a 3.35 per cent rise at the insurance giant Axa countered France Telecom's slide.

FRANKFURT

THE STOCK MARKET continued its rally in the wake of Oskar Lafontaine's resignation, closing up nearly 1 per cent. The Xetra DAX index rose 47.70 points to end at

Lufthansa, the national airline, jumped 4.5 per cent on news that it is to bid for a stake in Thai Airways, while Preussag jumped 4.5 per cent as it received the green light to sell 50 per cent of its shipbuilding unit to Deutsche Babcock. Merger activity between the French banks rippled across the border, lifting Deutsche Bank by 3.4 per cent.



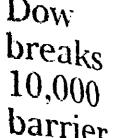
Dow breaks 10,000

THE INDEPENDENT Workington 1 - March 1966

> Medically writes David Ushnene in New York Hestory war, made and the first proof American comp stocks inches for the perior and a part to as angled by evers buriled. Them, in the bing of an every of the bob of a champeone cork - i was me ritional Lytic late spirit Don 200 four digit again

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the share prices of 30 US blue chip companies has surged nates, than 6000



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time hundreds. The makes, a composite of

Not a penny more for flying circus AIRBUS INDUSTRIE does not publish its own accounts - one of the joys of being part of that strange French hybrid known as a Groupe ment D'Interets Economique, or GIE. Even when financial infornation about the business does seep out into the public domain, it is only after liberal use of that old accounting double act, smoke and

mirrors. Whether Airbus really makes money or loses it is, like beauty, in the eye of the beholder. Or, to be more accurate, in the eyes of its industrial partners. Thus Airbus made a bottom-line loss of £120m last year according to British Aerospace, but an underlying profit of up to £450m if you believe Aérospatiale of France. For what it is worth, the figure they use down at Airbus headquarters in Toulouse is a £40m

operating profit. Noel Forgeard, who took over as chief executive of this peculiar beast a year ago, has sensibly decided that much of the profit the booking for the ast three years is as fictional as the finest work of Victor Hugo, and has begun to bring private sector con-

Thus were the Airbus accounts



OUTLOOK

for 1998 ever to see the light of day, they would show a £200m provision to cover exposure to unprofitable aircraft sales over the previous three years when the vicious price war with Boeing was at its height. There will be more of the same provisions this year and next, so that eventually Airbus will have taken some £400m in charges.

The adoption of more conventional accounting techniques is part of the necessary process of transforming Airbus into a single corporate entity with a recognisable balance sheet and a set of shareholders, as opposed to industrial partners.

its creation three decades ago the taxpayers of the four member countries, who have already pumped some £2bn into Airbus, will be able to see what their money is buying.

Conversion to this new status it wrong again. could take another 18 months, however, and is supposed to be a prerequisite for any more taxpayers' money being handed over It is ominous, therefore, that the four partners have already applied for-mally for another f2bn of launch aid for the latest paper plane - the A3XX super jumbo - with the intention of launching the programme some time in mid-2000.

The economics of the 600-seater jet and the markets for such a huge beast are far from proven, however lytical Airbus may wax about the sircraft. Full conversion to pic status must be a non-negotiable precondition before a single penny more of taxpayers' money is pumped into this project.

Dow milestone

THE DOW through 10,000 is such a milestone that it seems worth Full transparency is the name of returning to Wall Street's soar-

column attempted to pass judgement on it only last week. The bears and the bulk of the "serious" British press, including the "Pink 'un" and the Economist, have got

In recent months many have taken to depicting Wall Street as one of the biggest financial bubbles of all time. Plainly the Americans don't believe it. Readers will know that we haven't been exactly immune to the bubble theory ourselves, but we somewhat belatedly changed our minds when we saw action from the Federal Reserve to quell the turnoil in financial markets last autumn, and the subsequent strength of the recovery in

There are still good reasons for caution, and the bears must be right in insisting that eventually there will be a correction. Increasingly, however, they become like Tony Dye at Phillips & Drew: the scale of the correction now needed to vindicate their underweight positions in US equities has become so horrendous that it would take an economic calamity of monumental propor-

equity markets.

tions to bring it about. At this juncture that hardly looks

CSFB would have made Sfr2bn profit but for Russian losses

the game. For the first time since away bull market, even though this likely, despite the growing size of Bonds have also gone sharply into the US trade deficit and the risk reverse so far this year But until that foreign investors will not be there are real grounds for the Fed prepared to finance it for very much longer. It probably doesn't hold their value. make sense to pile into US equities at these levels, but until the world

changes, nor does it to predict calamity. Foreigners are prepared to keep pouring capital into the US not just because of the lack of alternatives, but also because American business for the time being seems to offer the best chance of innovation, advancement and growth. The US economy cannot keep

growing indefinitely at the present heady pace without a resurgence in price pressures. In a recent speech, Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, wondered out loud whether the Fed had not overreacted in cutting interest rates as far as it did in response to the financial turmoil of the autumn.

So far, however, the American economy shows little sign of giving him an excuse to raise them again. Inflation remains stoically in abeyance. There are warning signs; how far, for instance, do zero shortterm interest rates in Japan help provide a prop for Wall Street?

to act. US equity prices should

Terranova Foods

YOU HAVE to go back to Tomkins's bid for Ranks Hovis McDougall in 1992 for the last hostile bid in Britain's none-too-exciting food sector. We've got another one now, but sadly Unigate against Terranova Foods hardly has the look of a ding-dong battle. First, it is relatively small at less than £230m. Second, it is unlikely to go the full

We've been here before, of course, though the names have changed a bit in the past few months. It was only last autumn that Unigate had a £1.6bn dalliance with Hillsdown Holdings, It didn't much fancy the whole package, you understand, only one of its attributes. It was the chilled foods operations that led it to make an approach for the whole of the Hillsdown beast before eventually being frightened off.

The division was therefore

always bound to be vulnerable after being spun off in October as Terranova Foods, and so it has proved. Unigate had a go at an agreed deal at the weekend, but was rejected. Now it is a case of third time lucky. Or so it hopes,

What all this proves is that Unigate is as keen as mustard to buy this business. It wants Terranova's European interests to add to its own, while Terranova's Buxted chickens would make a neat fit with Unigate's Malton pig business. Add to this the target's M&S sandwich supply business, and it looks a very tasty morsel.

It won't win the prize at this price, though. Terranova has hardly been a stellar performer as a quoted entity; but Unigate's LESp-per shareoffer gives it a measly exit multiple of 14. The rise in Terramova's share price to 135.5p means Unigate must go higher.

ess.

Analysts reckon that around 150p would win the day, which would certainly suit Phillips & Drew, which was buying the stock heavily at around 90p as recontly as January, For it to get more exciting than this would take a rival bidder to emerge. So far. Tomkins is the

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CSFB cuts bonuses after slide into the red |Rhodia tops US

per cent at Credit Suisse First Financial Editor Boston following a torrid year in which the investment bank slumped Sfr221m (£93m) into the red after taking a hit of nearly Sfr2bn on last autumn's Rinsian bond market collapse.

Uredit Suisse, the bank's Swiss parent, also said yesterday that Dick Thornburgh is to step aside as group chief financial officer in April His place will be taken by Philip Ryan, currently chief financial officer of Credit Suisse Asset Management, while Mr Thornburgh moves to another role as vice chairman in charge of risk management at CSFB.

Bonuses were cut most steeply in equities and in emerging markets bonds, which suffered most heavily in last autumn's turmoil. These were also the areas which bore Wheat CSFB chairman repeated the invitation to other the brunt of last year's job

BONUSES HAVE been cut by 27 BY ANDREW GARFIELD

However, the bank said that payouts were much better on the pure investment banking side, which had a very good year, and in US and European fixed income, which held up

Lukas Mühlemann, chief executive officer of Credit Suisse Group said that, but for the Russian losses, CSFB would have made profits of Sir2on last At group level, however, prof-

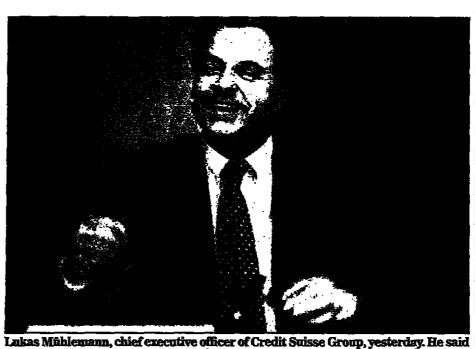
its rebounded sharply to Str3.1bn post-tax from Str601m in 1997, despite the CSFB upset largely as a result of dramatic improvement at the bank's domestic retail operations. Speaking by video link from New York yesterday, Allen

banks to join in the scheme the

bank has proposed for swapping worthless Russian bonds for stakes in Russian oil and gas

While CSFB and its clients have as much of 40 per cent of the total GKO and OFZ bond debt, preliminary indications from the Russian government are that the scheme needs wider backing for it to get serious consideration. "The Russian government's reaction is that if it is something of meaningful size and can be a cohesive group they are very prepared to discuss it," he said. "I hope we can come up with something which suits the creditors and which also suits the Russian economy.

He said CSFB had successfully integrated the former BZW businesses acquired from Barclays Bank the previous year and had substantiallу increased investment banking market share.



bid for Albright

ALBRIGHT & WILSON, the fine BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA chemicals group, was yesterday thrust into a transatlantic takeover war after Rhodia of France launched a £455m cash offer, topping a £408m bid from the US company Albemarie.

Rhodia's offer of 145p per share received the conditional backing of Phillips & Drew, A&W's largest shareholder. The fund manager pledged to sell its 23 per cent stake to the French speciality chemicals group - majority owned by Rhone-Poulenc - provided no other party bids more than 160p a share. The offer is being made through an Austrian investment vehicle to avoid interfering with Rhône-Poulenc's merger with Hoechst, the Ger-man life sciences company.

Mark Chilvers | draw the recommendation for

Albemarle's 130p-a-share bid. A&W refused to comment but it is likely to back Rhodia at a board meeting tomorrow.

Analysts said the move could trigger a counteroffer from Albemarie or flush out other bidders. "This is not a knockout blow," said Martin Evans, head of research at Sutherlands.

A&W shares soared 10.5p to 148p, indicating the market's expectation of a higher bid. Industry sources said Albemarle, which bought 18 per cent of A&W at 130p, could table a higher bid to force Rhodia to pay more. The US company said it was reviewing its options.

Pierre Prot. Rhodia's chief financial officer said a link with Rhodia asked the board of Albright would boost the com-A&W to back its offer and with- bined group's geographical coverage and buying power.

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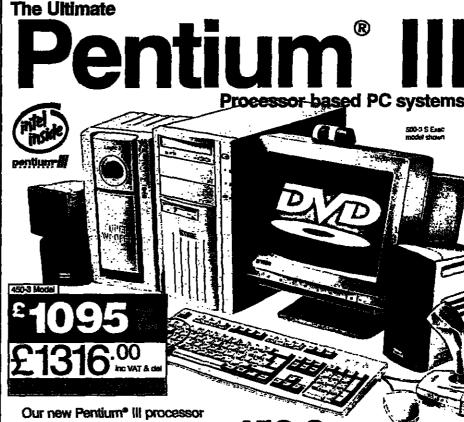
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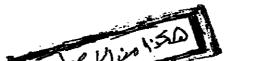
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Footsie unmoved by the Dow celebrations

ONLY A few months ago the sight of the Dow Jones Average riding above 10,000 points ould have given Footsie cause for celebration.

Not any more. As New York achieved, if only briefly, the remarkable landmark, London's blue chip index drifted 4.9 lower to 6,201.9. It was the third fall on the trot.

At one time the index was 62.8 higher but then weakened as the ramifications of the European Union shakeup prompted a more cautious approach.

But Footsie has for much of this year drifted out of line with the Dow Jones Average as the US index has burned on a rampant display, climbing from 9.276.

Many blame the decoupling on the launch of the euro and the Government's distinct shift towards the European culture. Although still by far the world's biggest share market, New York

ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY Systems, the most successful share on the fringe Ofex market, is moving to AIM. It is not raising any new money, and the stockbroker JM Finn appears to be elevating the shares through a simple introduction. Since arriving on Ofex, Robotic's

shares have climbed from

35p to around 305p. RTS

specialises in automation

the nuclear industry as

stems and services for

well as robotic technology.

could be losing at least some of its dominance.

Talk of a break has been around for years. And every so often London has appeared to flex its muscles and ignore its trans-Atlantic big brother. But such displays of independence have been brief and the slavish dependence on Wall Street has reasserted itself.

The Dow Jones Average has looked a sure fire bet to hit 10,000 from the early days of this year. Footsie moved to new highs in 1999, the last -6,335.7 - was reached last veek.

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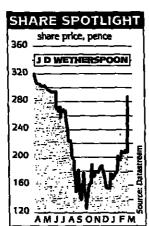
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MARKET REPORT

> DEREK PAIN



erage, and has often been pulled back by events which at one time would have been regarded as dismissible little local difficulties.

Although the stock market had a featureless session. trading was again busy with share volume nudging 1.1 billion. Supporting indices were to the fore with the mid cap up 0.8 to 5,519.7 and the small cap improving an impressive 9.2 to 2,375.8.

Once again takeover bids spurred the small cap brigade. Porter Chadburn, a packaging group, rose 14p to 37.25p as a US group appeared with a 38.5p a share offer, and Eclipse Blinds added 15p to 112.5p after Headlam, up 3.5p at 348.5p, produced a share exchange

Terranova, the food group, duly collected a bid from Unigate, jumping 31.5p to 135.5p as the market geared itself for a possible bid battle or at least an improvement on the 125p offer.

And Albright & Wilson a 145p shot, from interests re-

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always rewarding – as First Asda fell 2.5p to 142.75p and Choice, the package holiday group, continues to illustrate. The shares fell a further 12p to 161p, against a recent 189p high, on disappointment with

After their bashing on Monday telecoms recovered some ground with Colt Telecom up 56.5p to 995.5p although BT lost 19p to 1,039p.

Kuoni Reisen, the Swiss trav-

Ladbroke, the betting and hotel group, greeted the start of the Cheltenham Festival with a losing share price, off 12.5p at 295.25p. Warburg Dillon Read appeared to do the damage, reining back its recommendation from buy to

The major banks were firm, helping to reduce the Footsie retreat.

HSBC and Standard Chartered were singled out for attention as Morgan Stanley increased its HSBC target to 2,200p and Standard to

HSBC rose 27p (after 72p) to 1,929p and Standard 9.5p (27.5p) to 907p. Royal Bank of Scotland was up 43p to 1,289.5p as, coincidentally, HSBC lifted its share forecast to 1,500p. National Westminster Bank was 24p higher at 1,472p. National Power was up

10p at 463.5p following a back Finance. handed compliment from Merrill Lynch. In effect it described the shares as too low to sell. Tomkins, the buns to guns

conglomerate, remained under the whip, falling a further 10p to 214.5p. British Aerospace was

lowered 8.5p to 394p as the restructuring of Airbus Industrie, where BAe has 20 per cent, into a commercial company was advocated by John Leahy, the head of global He says the reshaping is

needed for financial reasons and the proposed A3XX airliner. The various parties controlling Airbus are in favour of the restructuring but have to 105p. been squabbling over management control.

Safeway fell 10.25p to 238.75p as a line of 1.5 million duly collected a higher offer. shares went through at 237p. Other supermarkets weak-

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Tesco 2.25p to 159.75p.

Disappointment with engineer Bodycote's figures hit the shares 92.5p to 890 and a profit warning from Kelsey the proposed merger with Industries smashed the price 125p to 310p.

Hi-tec, the sport shoes group, said it would make a loss and jogged 2.5p lower to JD Wetherspoon, the

pubs chain, frothed 10.5p higher to 283.5p as Merrill Lynch adopted a more positive stance. Signet, the jeweller,

firmed 0.75p to 47.5p in busy trading with Cazenove said to be backing the shares. UK Land climbed 11p (after 18p) to 118.5p on ru-

mours it had sold London's Elephant & Castle shopping centre for around £17m. The company denied the story. Morgan Crucible rose 12.5p to 259p following the sale of its maintenance and

SHARES OF Griffin Mining, which has zinc reserves in China, have nearly doubled to 18p since November.

The company has a dual AIM/Toronto share presence and it is thought that much of the advance stems from Canadian interest. Griffin used to be called European Mining

The present management arrived after a shareholder revolt about a year ago. Charles Stanley yesterday became the company's stockbroker following its acquisition of Burrough Johnstone.

repair business for £170m. It intends to buy back up to 14.99 per cent of its shares.

West 175, which makes cookery programmes for television, has clinched the acmisition of 60 per cent of Montage Projects, a production company. The shares gained 7p to 63.5p.

Somic, involved in a management buy out, jumped 25p

It is selling its fabrics business to its management and turning itself into a cash

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SEAQ VOLUME: 1.1bn gerness of the Dow Jones Av- group. But mergers are not returned to haunt the sector. GILTS INDEX: N/A

Telewest connects, but shares look expensive

Market value: £5,250n, share price 243,75p (+,25p)

Trading record 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998

Profit for the year (Em) -65.0 -115.0 -250.0 -310.0 -314.0

Title to come

By Peter Thal Larsen

TELEWEST, the cable group, yesterday displayed further evidence that it is finally realising the potential of its business that it has promised to for so long. But even this may not be enough to sustain its current share price.

Pre-tax losses deepened for the sixth consecutive year in the 12 months to December, rising to £314m from £310m. However, the market was more interested in Telewest's operating statistics, which generally showed

In the cable television business, penetration increased by 1.9 percentage points to 23.8 per cent, while churn - the proportion of the customer base leaving the service - dropped to 29.5 per cent from 34.5 per cent. Telewest's telephony penetration also improved, up by almost 2 points to 30.5 per cent. However, churn also edged up, reflecting a determined campaign by British Telecom to win back

former customers. The figures show the benefits of Telewest's decision to stop digging up the roads in order to concentrate on signing up new customers. The company has

executive. introduced a cut-price package

combining a basic set of televi-Crisps snack foods group - has sion channels with a cheap telephone service. "It's a levels at the notoriously cuscombination of good products tomer-unfriendly Telewest. and great value, and people are He points out that 94 per cent

more rejuctant to give those up," of calls to the company's cussaid Tony Illsley, the new chief tomer service centre are now answered, compared to 82 per Since his appointment in Sepcent six months ago. The protember Mr Illsley - a former portion answered within 30 sec-

Telewest is gearing up to launch its digital television and high-speed Internet services in the fourth quarter of this year. For the first time, cable operators have an advantage over competitors such as British Skv Broadcasting and British Telecom because they alone have a high-speed network capable of sending and receiving large

amounts of data. Much rests on the ability of these new services to deliver extra revenues for Telewest in the future.

At the moment the City is reserving its judgement. "The evidence is now irrefutable that Mr Illsley has improved the con-Alan Lyons, telecoms analyst at ABN Amro. "Time will tell whether the statistics respond."

On current forecasts, however, Telewest's share price, which has doubled in the past year, looks expensive. On a ratio of enterprise value to earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation - a common valuation measure for telecoms stocks - Telewest is now more highly rated than Vodafone.

Few doubt the potential of cable, but Mr Illsley will find it hard to live up to that kind of

Bottler falls flat in eastern Europe

COCA-COLA BEVERAGES, the BY NIGEL COPE bottling operation that came to Associate City Editor the market last summer continued its disappointing run yesterday with a 9 per cent fall in operating profits, attributed to problems in the Ukraine and Belarus. These operations fell into losses following the devaluation of the Russian rouble last

The company has taken action to shed jobs and mothball plants in the two trouble-

Dividends per share (p)

50 94 95 96 97 98 99

some territories, leading to an exceptional charge of £14.2m. This, together with £15.4m of other reorganisational charges, pushed Coca-Cola Beverages into a £15.5m loss for the year. However, the chairman and

chief executive, Neville Isdell, said the group should not be judged solely on its two worstperforming regions. He point-

ed to volumes up 6 per cent and times oversubscribed last sum-good growth in markets such as mer at an issue price of 160p as Italy and Poland as grounds for

"We feel a bit like Lennox Lewis," said Mr Isdell. "We've lost two rounds, but no-one seems to be interested in the other 10."

Even so the bottling group, which is 50 per cent owned by Coca-Cola, has proved to be a major stock market disap-

mer at an issue price of 160p as investors bought into the story of growth from emerging markets and the backing of the

Coca-Cola brand. But the Russian crisis has damaged both the business and sentiment and the shares now languish at 89p, down by 2.5p yesterday.

Prospects do not look to be exciting, but now is not the right pointment. The float was 13 time to sell.

but for Andersen Consulting.

Yesterday Lord Hamiya, the

Assets lose their balance

RED FACES over at Financial Objects, the banking software firm that reported its maiden results yesterday. Analysts perusing the balance sheet were numbers didn't add up; some-

from their net current assets. A contrite spokeswoman exniained: "It was all down to a yping error." At least she didn't plame the software...

Flown the coop

JOHN CHARMAN, regarded as one of the most aggressive and acerbic insurance brokers in the Lloyd's of London market, has lost his too-ranked five-man aviation team to rivals Welling

Mr Charman won't be unduly worried. He's trousered over £100m in cash from selling his Charman Group to Ace, one of the biggest Bermudan-based reinsurance companies, a few months ago.

The aviation team is led by Peter Williams, the active underwriter of Syndicate 960. To rub salt in the wound, Wellington, a quoted Lloyd's insurance company, inhabits offices slap bang next to Mr Charman's in Minster Court, a Gothic edifice off Fenchurch Street in the

Pru's off board

PRU LETTH is throwing in her apron at the Halifax. The famous restauranteur and former man of the Year is

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS

By John WILLCOCK

stunned to discover that the about to reach 60 and is due to their annual results press conenter a well earned retirement. ference yesterday with a cockboard of Leeds Building Society in 1992. The Leeds was subsequently merged with the Halifax, which in turn demutualised in June 1997.

Flames doused

WHO SAYS Swiss gnomes don't have a sense of humour? Lukas Muhleman, chief executive of Credit Suisse, and his fellow executives concluded

"Flaming Ferrari", of course, but none were forthcoming. There are limits.

Bob's temple

WHATEVER WOULD Robert Maxwell have made of it? The old Mirror headquarters at Holborn Circus, which the late tycoon wanted to redevelop as a giant temple to his success, is at last being developed

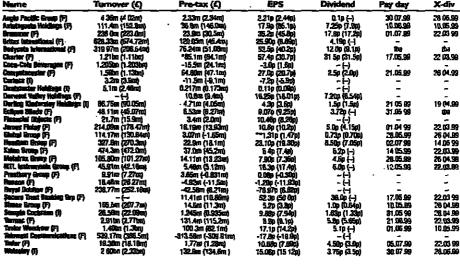
publisher, bought the building at 33 Holborn. He has planning permission for a "spectacular glass and steel building", costing £135m and designed by Sir Norman Foster, which will provide 320,000 square feet of space for Andersen

Elliott Bernerd, the chairty group, provided "assistance" to Lord Hamlyn in the pur-

This London "midtown" property market seems to be perking up a bit. Goldman Sachs is about to stuff another 5.000 people into Fleet Street, where it already has a head office. Perhaps not everybody's off to Canary Wharf, after all.

E-mail: j.willcock@independent.co.uk

COMPANY RESULTS



The Index-Tracking PEP

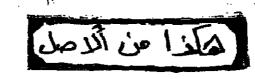
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SPORT

'Teeton Mill can inject a burst of speed but I think Florida Pearl travels better... and Dunwoody's an ice-cool guy'

Dillon master of the betting odds as C



THE BRIAN VINER INTERVIEW

THE CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL is upon us. Yesterday, the phenomenal Istabraq won the Champion Hurdle for the second successive year. If he hadn't, the casualty department at Cheltenham General would have come of tomorrow's Gold Cup. however, is much harder to predict Mike Dillon, the public relations director at Ladbrokes, fancies Florida Pearl to pip Teeton Mill, and punters might be wise to put their money where his mouth is. "Teeton Mill's a very good traveller," he says. "He can inject a burst of speed during a race. But I think Florida Pearl travels better. He's been brought along very well, he knows the territory, and Dunwoody's an icecool guy."

Dillon, a hugely engaging Man-cunian, is not only the public face of Ladbrokes, he also helps set their horse-racing odds. And he has a pretty good record in the Gold Cup. Seven years ago, he reckoned that the favourite, Carvill's Hill, was unlikely to win. "He was ridden by Scudamore, trained by Martin Pipe, both all-conquering, and he had won the Welsh National very easy, but I felt he had an Achilles heel, that on an undulating track over fast ground he would be vulnerable.

The odds were set accordingly. with Ladbrokes offering a better price than every other bookmaker. was odds on. When they were 6-4, we were 2-1. We took fortunes. And when he got beaten by Cool Ground. so I thought. About five minutes after the race we found out that an unemployed joiner from Portsmouth or somewhere had had these 10p doubles and trebles, and that the last leg was Cool Ground, a 25-1 shot in the Gold Cup. He won almost £600,000 for about seven quid. That's the magic of the game, you see. We go from euphoria to total despair."

The unemployed joiner was called Dick Mussell, and he has an entire file to himself at Ladbrokes' head office in north-west London. Dillon shows it to me, laughing with the abandon of a man who can afford to be magnanimous. During the three-day Cheltenham Festival, the bookmaking industry expects to take around £100m in bets, an average of £5m per race, and Ladbrokes has a quarter share of the market.

To accommodate the punters, the ever-obliging Ladbrokes are opening their Cheltenham shops at 8am, and even permitting bets in Irish punts. Meanwhile, the company has already pocketed at least £60,000 - one punter placed £40,000 at 4-1 on His Song to win yesterday's Arkle Challenge Trophy (he was unplaced). and had a further £20,000 treble on His Song, Istabraq and Florida Pearl.



Mike Dillon's white-knuckle ride: 'A big gambler called Noel Furlong had a horse called The Illiad. He backed him from 36-1 down to 6-1 and won about £2m that day

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you needn't be Einstein to know where that bet came from."

Similarly, you needn't be Dillon is enjoying himself at Chel-tenham. I should think that if he's rubbing his hands gleefully. Ladbrokes are quids in. But if the knuckles are white, the punters are winning. Or perhaps just one punter. "A few years ago a big gambler called Noel Furlong had a horse called The Illiad," Dillon recalls. "He ran in the race we sponsor at Leopardstown in January, the Ladbroke, and Furlong backed him from 36-1 down to 6-1. He won about £2m that day, and then The Illiad ran in the Champion Hurdle. Furlong backed him in big multiple bets with another horse of his. who ran in the first race and absolutely doddled it. Luckily The Illiad didn't win at Cheltenham, or he'd have won about £20 million. Noel Furlong took the ring on on his own that day."

In bookmaking jargon, the betting market is "the ring." And the offering of seductive odds, attracting large numbers of bets, is known as "getting a horse beaten". In the Grand National one year, Dillon got Bonanza Boy beaten, big-time. "I just couldn't see him winning. I have a set of rules when I assess a horse. and the number one rule is how well it travels. I don't like horses who have to be hustled and bustled, and

trainer, Martin Pipe, ridden by the rows of bets under 5-2." champion jockey, Peter Scudamore, All the world wants to back him and he can't win." Dillon is admirably candid about

his efforts to, in essence, hoodwink the punter. And that's fair enough, since plenty of punters try to hoodwink the bookie, by foul means as well as fair. Ladbrokes shop managers, particularly in horsey areas like Newmarket, are expected to hold a particularly tight rein. "If there's a selling hurdle at Plumpton on a Monday, and someone comes in off the street, someone you've never seen before, and puts on £10,000, the manager would want locking up if he didn't think the fella might know more about the race than we do."

The fixing of football matches by nobbling the floodlights is only the latest of many betting scams. Dil-Ion recalls Ladbrokes offering odds on the results of seven-frame matches in a snooker tournament in Derby about 15 years ago. "And a fella came into one of our shops wanting to bet £2,000 at 7-1 on a particular game finishing 5-2. The manager told him the price had gone down to evens. He said 'well, I'll have viously a hooky game. The manager had a ledger of all the bets and

"All Irish horses," notes Dillon. "So Bonanza Boy was one of those. But there was nothing in the 7-0 or the ly. "At Cheltenham a few years ago he was trained by the champion 6-1 or 4-3 columns, but rows and I didn't think a horse called Kriben-

There are other people at Ladsnooker, however Dillon's overriding concern is horse racing, which represents 70 per cent of the coming at it. So we laid 5-1 when everypany's £1.7bn turnover, with dog racing amounting to 20 per cent. And his daily challenge is to get a horse beaten, a challenge which on occasion, I venture, must go badly wrong. "Oh yeah, I've made some cata-

PLANT WARD IN SET WITHET TO MILES SSETUL SUT CHES Pasty musica 9 P. P. T. TR. DETHE ---مراولي من المرادي المان المرادي 34 C 164

two grand at evens, then.' It was ob- Passport to a fortune: The betting slip that won almost £600,000 for Dick Mussell

SPORTS LETTERS

Post letters to Sports Desk at 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number. Faxes to 0171 293 2894 or e-mail to sport@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity

sis had what it took to win the

was a flat trainer with only one jumper, and I thought he was playone else offered 4-1, and of course he won. I was sick as a pig." The extra unit lost Ladbrokes about a million pounds, says Dillon, blanching even now at the memory. But the chief executive of the racing division, Peter strophic mistakes," he admits bright-George, who now runs the whole

> told me to stick to my principles." Sometimes, losses are borne not only stoically but cheerfully, in the knowledge that they add up to an investment in the company's future. "Every time Red Rum won, we lost," says Dillon. "But we didn't mind paying out, because it increased the profile of betting. He took us off the sports pages and put us on the news pages. The same with Desert Orchid, and with Dettori's Seven, which cost the industry £40 million. I know £40m is a bit of a steep advertising budget, but in the long run Dettori's Seven was fantastic for

company, was supportive. "He just

Knowing this, it is hard to overlook the old saw that bookies never lose. Moreover, I tell Dillon that I was at Leopardstown earlier this year to interview the champion jump jock-ey Tony McCoy. I backed McCoy's

the industry."

rides in three races, all of which lost, and when I met him he said they never had a prayer of winning any-way. "Betting is a mug's game," cheerful countenance clouds over. "Don't tell Dick Mussell it's a mug's game," he says. "Besides, we run the on-course betting shop at Leopardstown, and we ran out of both money and cheques that day. We had to tell the punters to come back for their winnings the next day, which pleased them, actually. They would rather go to the pub and say Ladbrokes couldn't afford to pay them than have the money to buy a round."

Dillon is a betting man himself He bets very selectively, and with slightly more prudence than the man who wrote to Ladbrokes asking what price they would give on him being abducted by aliens and returned to earth as a giant yellow teapot. "I have very good discipline," says Dillon. "I can go weeks without, then have two in half an hour" He knows, of course, who most of the high rollers are. "But sometimes people come out of the ground," he says. "Like the guy who put £80,000 in cash on Shergar to win the Derby, or the fella who came in with a Halifax Building Society draft for 50 grand, and put it on Carvill's Hill to win the Gold Cup. That was the original placing your

house on one." The biggest single bet he can re-

call had nothing to do with sheepskin £2 million at evens on Brazil to with the 1994 World Cup in 90 minutes there was a worrying moment when the ball came off the post and into the Italian goalie's hands." Meanwhile, Dillon must be the only Manchester United supporter hoping that United leave Milan with nothing better than a 0-0 draw tonight. "That would suit us great. We want United in the semi-final but ponters don't bet on nil-nils. The last game was the worst possible result for us. because Dwight Yorke scoring the first goal and a score of 2-0 was the most popular double. We lost about £250,000 on that match."

Ladbrokes will also lose a significant amount of money if a female jockey wins next month's Grand National In 1989, a punter bet \$400 in doubles and trebles on Cliff Richard being knighted (4-1), a Brit become ing world heavyweight boxing champion (10-1), and a female jockey winning the National (33-1), all by the year 2000. He has already won-£11,000 and stands to win a further £128,000 if the third leg of his treble comes off. Indeed, he has offered certain trainers £50,000 of his winnings to give a woman a top ride. "Luckily he has no possible chance in the world," says Dillon. He pauses, as if to reassure himself. No. no. no. No possible chance in the world."

Mystery of the Orient

Sir: I refer to the statement in today's newspaper (early editions, 15 March) headed: "Frank Warren (promoter and Leyton Orient chairman)".

I take this as a serious libellous and scandalous statement! I would not go and watch Leyton Orient upon the pain of death. FRANK WARREN Sports Network Europe, Hertford

Draw your own conclusion

Sir. Your main article on Saturday's fight couldn't have been further from the truth. I am an English expatriate living in the US. I paid \$50 (£30) to watch the fight live on HBO.

At the end of the fight, the three commentators (all Americans) including George Foreman, decried the result. One of the commentators said: "Tonight two

judges stole the result." Foreman said: "Tonight I am ashamed to be an American. Britain could at least be proud in the knowledge that Lennox Lewis is the best heavyweight boxer in the world." Finally, the Governor of New York has ordered an investigation by the State athletic commission regarding possible bribery and corruption.

I saw Lennox Lewis dominate the fight. I have no doubt he was robbed MARTIN IRISH

via e-mail Crisp put down

Sir. In his article (Pringle's perspective suits Charlton". 13 March) Gienn Moore describes Martin Pringle, the Charlton footballer, as "a dark-skinned Swede with an English name".

It is possible that Mr Moore may have fallen into the common error of believing that Scotland is part of England. Alternatively, he may be unaware that Pringle is in fact one of the most Scottish of names; unlike many of the names widely regarded as being Scottish, its origins are not Irish and can be traced to an identifiable location north of the border. JOHN PRINGLE Balerno, Midlothian

Hodgson's choice

Sir: Re: "Merseyside on defence over Fowler furore" by Guy Hodgson (12 March). What an excellent article this is. Nothing I have seen or heard to date sums up the feelings of Merseysiders on the good guy-bad guy reporting since the Le Saux-

To a complete outsider how must all this look? Therein lies the answer. JOHN COWELL

Unwise words

Sir: Today in the Independent you quote Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, as saying: "When Italians tell me it's pasta I check under the sauce to see if it is. They are masters of the smokescreen."

Is that not a racist remark and are you not fostering racism by giving space to such remarks? **AMINA SANTCROSS** Wembley, Middlesex

Crying foul

Sir: First I'd like to point out that banter and mind games between

footballers is nothing new. It does not excuse a player giving a forearm smash around the back of another player's head while the ref isn't looking. If, as Richard Williams writes in his article on the front page of last Thursday's Review. Graeme Le Saux is as much of a culture vulture as we are led to believe, then surely this educated, informed lad can realise that Fowler was, although very crudely, simply winding him up. Anyone with any common sense could have realised this and for someone so educated to react in such a way is equally out of order

Based on the report from a friend, Williams then goes on to further character assassinate Fowler, (this is the lad who was commended by Uefa for his honesty against Arsenal last season) leading the reader to

believe that Fowler is nothing more than a money-grabber. having just signed a £40,000 per week contact with Liverpool while Le Saux is an innocent bystander who has a fiery temper, fights with his own teammates and is constantly getting

retaliation all for simply reading

booked and sent off for

the Guardian. On the other hand, you could say Fowler was crude in his method and needs reprimanding. But you could also say that Fowler has resisted the money-grabbing Bosman option and instead chosen to earn the living that any other top Premiership player can at the club that brought him up through the ranks, thus proving that clubs and players can still be loyal to each other. **BRIAN NICHOLAS**

Snob tendence:

Sir. Thank you for reinforcing my views on the "glory seekers" who believe that the only football worth watching is League, or

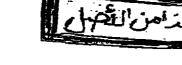
preferably Premiership football

Alan Edge's article on non-League football ("Man marked by an anorak", 15 March), even taking into account its attempts to be humorous, was patronising. If he really believes that non-League games are just the preserve of "anoraks" he can't be going to many non-League games. The vast majority of non-League fans are totally normal and support teams who are connected with where they live or were born. They get as much enjoyment as any League fan and treat the game

with more humour and realism. Mr Edge should use his weekends off from blowing £30 to see-"real" football to go and patronis someone else! At your local talk you'll get a warm welcome itself you'll get a warm welcome and the mistakes, and have some If you want to sneer, stay of hou CHRIS HUNTER

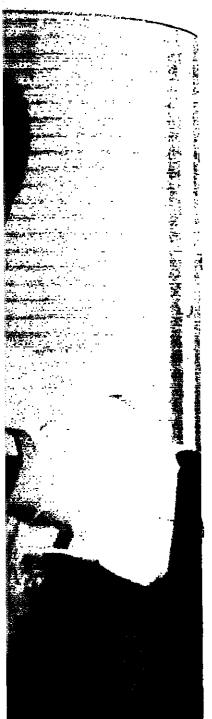
Woking Supporter and proud PS Well done on your Non-Les Notebook Keep up the good work

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the temptation to tinker with his line-up and restricted himself to one enforced change in the starting XV and two alterations, equally enforced, among the re-Mike Catt was 99 per cent certain to return at outside half once Paul Grayson had been diagnosed as suffering from a stress fracture of the pelvis and

Woodward was a paragon of predictability yesterday. "The change was pretty straightforward," confirmed the coach. "I watched Mike play for Bath at Richmond on Saturday and he performed very well. It's not a great time for Paul to be inured but I feel more upset for bim than I do for myself." The bench personnel has

some surprises, however. Barrie Jon Mather, Sale's forindicator of the paucity of England's midfield resources in the long-term absence of Will Greenwood and Phil de Glanville. Darren Grewcock's serious knee injury means a recall for Garath Archer as substitute lock, while Victor Ubogu's form for Bath has slammed the door on Leicester's Graham Rowntree, who must seek dubious solace in Friday's second-string A inter-

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national at Redruth. Woodward's decision to field

England

cautious as Catt recalled

THERE WAS a good deal of talk RUGBY UNION about "Tag Rugby" at Twickenham yesterday, not only be-cause the Ford Motor Company BY CHRIS HEWETT had just invested £700,000 in a Grayson against the Irish in the nationwide campaign to prolast round of Five Nations mote the latest non-contact matches merely reinforced the

sional brilliance is a luxury.

The coach mounted an enthu-

siastic defence of the mercur-

ial Bath stand-off yesterday -

"Paul gave us exactly what we

needed in Dublin, but who can

self appeared to acknowledge

English rugby public in their opinion of Catt: that his occathe French were about to cross the channel for this weekend's episode of the long-running sporting soap celebrated throughout Europe as "Le Crunch". Judged purely on their performance against Wales in Paris 11 days ago, this know for sure that I wouldn't latest Tricolore vintage looks have brought in Mike for this about as "non-contact" as it is one?" he asked - but Catt himpossible to get. Not that Clive Woodward is

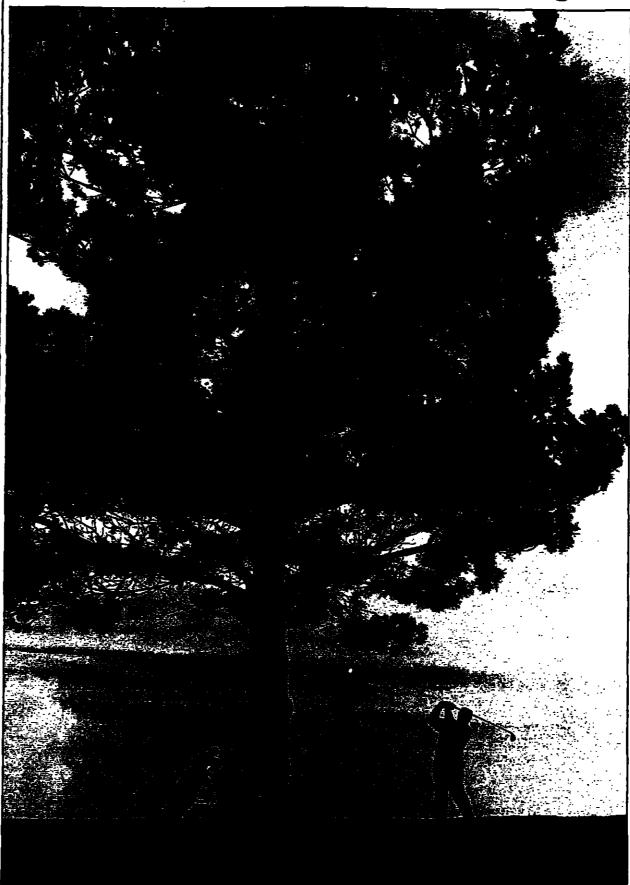
form of the game, but because

the short-term nature of his taking any liberties or counting any onions; in fact, the Englan "I'm getting used to the feelcoach is so deeply suspicious of ing of keeping the outside-half the French side's apparent enseat warm for others," he said, thusiasm for rugby pacifism in referring to Jonny Wilkinson all its manifestations – no shovrather than Grayson, "Jonny is ing in the scrums, no jumping an exceptional talent and when in the line outs, no tackling in Clive and the selectors consider the time right for him to take midfield - that he has resisted hold of the No 10 shirt, I'm sure they'll move him inside from centre. But in the meantime, it's up to me to go out there and make things happen whenever I'm given the oppor-

tunity. Personally speaking, this Saturday is pay-back day." Catt was not alone in finding last season's corresponding fixture at the Stade de France a debilitating experience; indeed, Woodward still refers to it as the low point of his coaching career, quite a statement when you take into account the 76-0 nightmare in Brisbane. "It hurt, not simply because it was so unexpected but because it was the first game of the championship and therefore wrecked

erything," he explained. "And now we must prepare for a French side without knowappears in a Test 22 for the first the game. All we can be sure of time and his appearance is an is the depth of their motivation after losing to Wales. We have shown ourselves that it is possible to bounce back almost overnight from a substandard performance. For that reason,

Swinging through the trees at Sunningdale W Indies



Force of nature: A competitor in the Sunningdale Foursomes tees off at the sixth hole yesterday. Among the first-round winners was the former racing driver Nigel Mansell, who, with fellow amateur John Putt, beat the Kent professionals Paul Sherman and Larry Batchelor 2 & 1

SPORTING DIGEST

end Test drought

THE WEST INDIES took threequarters of an hour to complete victory over Australia by 10 wickets in the second Test at Sabina Park yesterday. The win ended a depressing sequence of six defeats and, according to captain Brian Lara, regained their pride and self-belief.

Courtney Walsh, their longest-serving player in his 108th Test, took his overall tally of Test wickets to 410 when Jason Gillespie was caught down the leg side off the glove by the wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs. Nehemiah Perry, the offspinner in his first Test, ended the innings with his fifth wicket when he had Stuart MacGill caught at leg slip. The West Indies openers then needed four balls to complete the formality of scoring three runs.

Lara, whose devastating 213 inspired the triumph, was "elated and relieved" at the result but cautioned against proclaiming it an instant renaissance of a team that had been at its lowest ebb only eight days earlier following a second innings total of 51 and a drubbing by 312 runs in the first Test.

"Most importantly, we've gained the confidence that we need and that has been lacking for the past five or six months in West Indies cricket," he said. "I'd like to say it is the turning point for us but now we've got the confidence, we've got to put together a greater team effort with bat, ball and especially in the field to ensure we dominate the remainder of the series."

Lara more than any contemporary cricketer knows how fickle the fates can be and is taking nothing for granted. "Australia are capable of bouncing back. They're going to come back even barder in the next Test match."

Lara's performance not only virtually determined the outcome of the match, but also guaranteed his captaincy for the remainder of this series as well as this summer's World Cup. The West Indies Cricket Board. disturbed by the 5-0 whitewash in the preceding Test series in BY TONY COZIER

in Port of Spain

West Indies 431 & 3-0 West Indies win by 10 wickets

South Africa, had placed him on probation as captain for only two Tests. That issue was settled once Lara started to plunder the Australian bowling on Sunday afternoon.

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Such stability will strengthen the West Indies as will the likely return of two regulars, the all-rounder Carl Hooper and Shivnarine Chanderpaul, the left-handed batsman, for the third Test in Bridgetown from 26 to 30 March, Hooper has been in Adelaide with his Australian wife since the end of the South Africa tour while their infant son recovered from illness. Chanderpaul has been restricted by damaged shoulder ligaments

In their absence, the West Indies' team in this Test was the most inexperienced since Kerry Packer bijacked all their leading players in 1977. It rendered their triumph all the more remarkable.

Perry and the batsman Lincoln Roberts were making their debuts, the batsmen Suruj Ragoonath, who hit the winning runs, and Dave Joseph and the left-arm fast bowler Pedro Collins, were in their second Tests. It simply underscored the enormity of the West Indies' win. Fourth day, Australia won toss AUSTRALIA - First Innings 256 (S R Waugh 100, M E Waugh 67; C A Walsh 4-

WEST INDIES - First landings 431 (B C Lara 213,) C Adams 94; G D McGrath 5-

AUSTRALIA – Second inni (Overnight 157 for 8) 4 Gillespie c Jacobs b Walsh 5 G MacGill c Joseph b Perry .. McGrath not cut etras (163 n616)

Pail (cont): 9-159
Bouning: Ambrose 14-4-28-1; Wolsh 18
3-52-3: Perry 26-8-70-5; Collins 8-0-24-0
WIEST DWDIES — Second Innings
5 Ragoonath not out

(Engl.)
First Test: Australia won by 312 runs
Taked case: March 26 to 30 (Bridgetow

Wigan decide not to risk Smith for Leeds return

TONY SMITH has been ruled out of Wigan's revenge mission performance. For that reason, France will be very dangerous."

ENGLAND (v France, Five Nations' Champtonship, at Endicatham, 20 March): M Perry (Bath): D Reas (Sale). J Williamson (Newcaste). J Gascott (Bath). M Lager (Haricquins): M Catt (Bath). K Bradten (Sarcers): J Leosard (Haricquins). R Coctarill, D Garforth, M Johnson (all Leicester). T Rodber (Northampton), R MB (Saracers), L Dallagilo (Wasps, capt). M Back (Leicester). Replacements: M Beal (Northampton), B J Mather (Sale). M Danson (Northampton). M Corry (Leicester). Replacements: M Beal (Northampton). M Corry (Leicester). M Danson (Northampton). M Corry (Leicester). M Lager (Newcaste). V Ubogu (Bath). M McCartiny (Geocester). at Leeds on Friday. The Great

play and our physic just wasn't injury. Rob Ball stands by to re-

BY DAVE HADFIELD "We have another two weeks

earmarked for a return, but the Leeds, so it's not a good risk." Simon Haughton has also had a setback, turning his ankle in training after seeming to with the side if he was going to have overcome his hamstring

place him on the bench at

ATHLETICS

RUGBY LEAGUE Headingley in an otherwise cide this week where to play to move it, but the booking for been one of Gateshead's highunchanged side as Wigan try to their match against Wigan on avenge their Silk Cut Challenge Cup defeat.

The match will be the first son friendly at Halifax, was before our next game after played under a new charter al Stadium because of a veteragreed between the League's Director of Referees, Greg Mc-Callum, and Super League coaches covering the interpretation of rules, especially around the play-the-ball.

Gateshead Thunder will de-

1 August, which they must move from their normal home at the Gateshead Internationans' athletics meeting.

Tynecastle in Edinburgh and Sunderland's Stadium of Light are the venues under discussion for one of the new Super League club's plum fixtures. "It's unfortunate that we have

the athletics at the stadium was made two years ago," said the Thunder's chief executive, now want to do is take the maximise its impact."

Tynecastle successfully staged a Super League match between London and Bradford last season, while the Sunderland manager, Peter Reid, has

profile supporters in the North-East. Of more immediate concern to the Thunder is the Shane Richardson, "What we fact that their captain, Kerrod Walters, may miss the match at match to the place that will St Helens in 11 days' time because of his injured groin.

Nick Halafihi, who left St Helens' backroom staff earlier this month, has been appointed director of development at the Rugby League.

Minali injured in multiple crash

THE LEADING sprinters Nicola Minali and Mario Cipollini were among several riders injured in a crash yesterday at the end of the seventh stage of the Italian Tirreno to Adriatico race.

Steven De Jong of the Netherlands slipped past to win the stage, while Michele Bartoli, the world No 1, retained his narrow overall lead with one day left in the event, a warmup for the World Cup season.

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CYCLING

With around 75 metres left, Minali, Cipollini and Fabio Baldato touched bicycles and toppled to the road. Minali, who won two stages at the 1997 Tour de France, slammed into roadside advertising signs before colliding with Giuseppe hospital with leg injuries and a possible broken right wrist. the line.

SNOW REPORTS in association with WorldCover Direct

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Baldato may have a broken collar-bone, while Palumbo injured a shoulder. Cipollini escaped with bruises and cuts.

De Jong covered the 160 kilometres from Alba Adriatica to Civitanova Marche on the Adriatic coast in 4hr 19min 10sec. He edged out Poland's Zbigniew Spruch at the finish. Palumbo, Minali was taken to Bartoli, the detending World Cup champion, was 10th across

Tegla Loroupe, of Kenya, will defend her Bupa Great Caledonian run ti-tle next month, despite the 10km race, which has been designed within the royal estate at Balmoral, coming only a week after the Rotterdam Marathon. Last year in Rot-Arsec, a performance which gained her a special achievement award from the international Amateur Athletic Federation.

BASKETBALL NBA: Toronto 89 Charlotte 82; Orlando 74 Philadelphia 73; New York 108 Min-watukee 102: Utah 90 Minnestot 83; Cleve-land 89 Chicago 85 (ot); Portland 106 Dallas 91; Derwer 110 Vancouver 84; Saca-mento 111 Golden Scate 105.

17 4 810 -16 7 696 2 11 9 550 5% 11 10 524 6 11 12 478 7 9 13 409 6% 1 19 050 15% BOWLS WICHEST'S HOME INTERNATIONAL IN-DOOR CKAMPIONSHIP (Bedfast): England by Misles 116-98 (Eng skips first: E Bessell bt D Rowlands 19-16; D Hankin bt J Ackland 19-16; J Royancy lost to M Tanner 12-17; D Hunt bt 5 Dilver 17-14; K Strutt lost to L Exars 18-22. B Alder-son bt A Dainton 31-8).

Shea Neary's fifth defence of his World Boring Union light-welter-weight title against the American Mike Griffith in Dublin on 17 April CRICKET

Middlesex have re-signed Mike Rose-berry from Durham. The 32-year-old opening batsman had 10 seasons at

Lord's before leaving to captain his native county four years ago. native country four years ago. ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL (Obaka, Bangkindesh): Pakistan 293 for 7 (50 overs; Saeed Ariwar 64, Inzamam-ul-haq 70): Bangkadesh 141 (40.5 overs). Pak-istan mon by 152 runs.

The German rider Carsten Wolf has been suspended for six months for

The German rider Carsten Wolf has been suspended for sk months for falling a drugs test at the Grenoble six days race last October.

TRICENSO-ADMINITION RACE Seventh stage (160km, Alba Administra to Chitanowa Marchell: 15 De Jongh (Neth) 4hr 19min 10sec: 2 2 Spruch (Pöl); 8 F Guidi (II); 4 L Michaelsen (Den); 5 E Zabel (Ger); 6 A Petacchi (III; 7 F Simon (Fr); 8 A Boo (Sp); 9 L Guidi (II); 10 M Bartoli (II) all same time. Overall standings: 1 Bartoli 31hr 30min 16sec; 2 D Rebellin (II) +9sec; 3 S Garzelli (II) +14; 4 L Jalabert (Fr) +21: 5 I Gonzalez (Sp) +30: 6 A Spezialetti (II) +1min 56sec; 7 B Hamburger (Den) +3:57; 8 C Jenore (TNZ) +4:26; 9 O Camenzind (Swit) s/t: 10 D Casarono (It) +4:27.

The German Karl Heinz Feidkamp has replaced John Toshack as coach of the Turkish club, Besiktas. Paul Barnes, the Huddersfield Town striker, has joined First Division ri-vals Bury for £50,000. Tom Cowan, the Huddersfield Town full-back, yesterday joined Burnley for a nominal sum. Hibemian have signed Liverpool's re-serve goalkeeper Tony Warner on a two-week trial. sor to lan McNeil. CUARTER-FINALS SECOND LEG

Veron 48 Bafoo pen 89 Parma won 7-2 on aggregate
SCOTTISH LEAGUE THURD DIVISION:
Postposed: Dumbarton v Cowdenbeath.

Parma won 7-2 on aggregate
SCOTTISM LEAGUE THURD DIVISSOM:
Postposed: Dumbarton v Cowdenbeath.
ANOR BESURANCE COMERNATION FIRST
Division: Colchester 2 Crystal Palace 1:
Reading O Chariton 1.
Reading O Chariton 1.
PONTINES LEAGUE Third Division: Halifax 1 Rochdale 2.
RHONDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Possions
League Premier Divisions: Blackburn 1
Manchester Utd C: Sunderland 1 Aston Valia 1. Unglisonal League Premier Divisions
Entely 1 Winston Albion 2. Dr Martenis
League Premier Division: Atherstone 2
Sallsbury O. Southern Division: Delivisions
Aston Utd O Witton Albion 2. Dr Martenis
League Premier Division: Atherstone 2
Sallsbury O. Southern Division: Davison
I Standard Delivision: Representation of 1 Individed 1. Ryman League Premier Division: Degenham & Reddrige 1 Harrow
Borough O. North Western Trains League
First Disision: Chrone 5 Holter Old Boys
1. Scransflix Direct League Premier Division: Refyrsten Hown O Backwell Utd 1.
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND SOUAD [Enrepease Charptonish Chalifying Group
Eight masch & Mancadonia, Shople, 27
March]: Given (Newcastel). Melly
(Sheffield Utd), Irwin (Manchester Utd),
Carr (Externam), Harot (Leets), Scansons
(Liverpool), Cassingham (Winbectott,
Breen (Coventry), Babb (Liverpool), Ruy
Manna (Manchester Utd), McAcer (Blackburn), Klassella (Charlton), McLoughila
(Portsmouth), Carlot Utd, McAcer (Blackburn), Klassella (Charlton), McLoughila
(Portsmouth), Cansonil (Wolves),
WMALES SOUAD (Utd Underland), Cascarrino (Mancy), Robbie Kabes (Wolves),
WMALES SOUAD (Utd Underland), Cascarrino (Mancy), Robbie Kabes (Wolves),
WMALES SOUAD (Utd Underland), Cascarrino (Mancy), Robbie Kabes (Wolves),
Prince (Swarose), Maghes (Wile),
Robbiers (Swarose), Maghes (Wile),
Robbiers (Swarose), Hughes (Wile),
National (Blackburn), Williams
(Blackburn), Bremen (Cartiff), Gabbidon
(WAR), O'Leary (Swarose), Hughes (Wester),
National (Researce), Aughes (Parker)

(WAR), O'Leary (Swarose), Hughes (Wester),
National (Researce), Aughes (Wester),
National (Researce), Aughes (Wester),
National (Resear NATIONNIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE R.

ICE HOCKEY MML: Buffato 2 NY Islanders 1: NY Rangers 1 Washington 1 (ot): Phoenix 5 Carolina 5 (ot): New Jersey 2 Vancouver 1; Los Angeles 4 Octawa 0.

RUGBY UNION ENGLAND A (v France A, Redwich, Friday): C Catting (Gloucester): L Lloyd (Leicester), Mensah (Hartenthis), T Underwood (Newcaste): M Mupletont: (Goucester), S Catter (Sancers), D Crosspton (Richmond), M Converte (Gloucester), R Fadler (Gloucester), B Charles (Fichmond),

INDIA

0800 097 5140

FOOTBALL 7.30 unless stated SUROPEAN CUP

QUARTER-FINALS SECOND LEG Dynamo Kiev (1) v R Madrid (1) (7.45) Internazionale (0) v Man Utd (2) (7.45) Kalserslautern (0) v B Munich (2) (7.45) Olympiakos (1) v Juventus (2) (7.45) NATIONWIDE CONFERENCE Forest Green v Yeovil (7.45)

FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Clacknacuddin v Keith (8.0);

(0.U).

DR MARTENS LEAGUE Midland Disision: Pager Rangers v Moor Green; Sollhull Borough v Sutton Coldfield.
Southern Division: Brackley v Baldock. WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE Pro-mier Division: Canterbury City v Green-wich Borough.

TODAY'S FIXTURES UNIUET SUSSIDK COUNTY LEAGUE First Division: East Preston v Chichester City, Hassocks v Languey Sports. JEWSON WESSEK LEAGUE First

Division: Cowes Sports v Gosport Borough: Hamble ASSC v Whitzhurch.
ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN
LEAGUE First Division: Guisborough
Town v Billingham Synthonia.
THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP Fifthroad replay: Crystal Palace v Arsenil.
PONTINS LEAGUE Premier Division: Bilteringham v Stoke (7.15): Nottingham Forest v Derby (7.0): Mancheser City v Grimsby (7.0): Middlesbrough v Wolverhampton (7.0): Second Division: Bilacipool v Newsciste (7.0): Huddersfield v York (7.0): Rotherham v Shrewsbury (2.0): Scarborough v Notts County (2.0): Wredham v Lincoln (2.0). Third Division: Bury v Hull (2.0): Chester v Carilse (2.0): Chester v Carilse (2.0): Chester v Carilse (2.0): Chester v Carilse (2.0): Third Division: Bury v Hull (2.0): Chester v Carilse (2.0): Chester v Bradford (7.0).
ANON URSURANCE COMBINATION
First Division: Brentford v Norwich (2.0): Erighton v Winit Ledon (7.0): Cambridge v Southampton (2.0): Crystal

Palace v Colchester; Gillingham v West Harn; Luton v Wycombe (2.0); Oxford v Barnet: Peterborough v Bournemouth (7.0); Watford v Queen's Park Rangers. RUGBY LEAGUE

NORTHERN FORD PREMIERSHIP: Featherstone v Widnes (7.30); Hull Kingston Rovers v Oldham (7.30); White-haven v Lancashire Lynx (7.30). RUGBY UNION ANGLO-MELSH FREENDLY: Gloucest v Cardiff (7.45). CLUB MATCHES: Combined London OB v Surrey (7.30) (at Esher); Richmond XV v Royal Navy (7.30) (at the Athletic Ground).

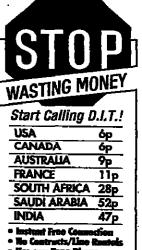
BASKETBALL BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Birmingham Bullets v Edinburgh Rocks (7.30) (at Aston Villa); Worthing Bears v Derby Storm (8.0).

OTHER SPORTS **GOLF:** Sunningdale Foursomes.

A Vander (Richmond), T Diprose (Sur-cers, capt), Replacements: J Essens (Bediord, A Ming (Mappo, N Whishe (Har-lequins), S Ojosnob (Gioucester), S Share (Mappo), T Whodiman (Gioucester), M Re-gan (Bath). Leeds have appointed lan Broomfield as their new chief scout as succes-

SPEEDWAY Sky Sports are to screen live Elite League matches this season. Coven-try's home meeting with Wolver-hampton opens the 20-week schedule on 13 May.

SPRIMS GRAND TOURHANNENT (Oraica, Japany) Third day of 15t Asanowska
(won 1, lost 2) bt Kyokutenho (furyo) (1-2),
Wakanojo (2-1) bt Kaiho (2-1); Gojoro
(1-2) bt Asanosho (1-2); Ohinode (2-1) bt
Hamanoshima (1-2); Toktissumi (2-1) bt
Hamanoshima (1-2); Toktissumi (2-1) bt
Hotoryu (2-1); Ganyu (1-2) bt Witozumi (03); Chyotenzan (3-0) bt Wikisnosha (1-2); Bid
(2-1) bt Migabyama (2-1); Minachuji (2-1)
bt Higonounti (1-2); Tamakasuga (1-2) bt
Tosanoumi (1-2); Tamakasuga (1-2) bt
Tosanoumi (1-2); Tamakasuga (1-2); Asinoshima (2-1) bt Kroonowska (1-2); Asinoshima (2-1) bt Kroonowska (1-2); Asinoshima (2-1) bt (1-2); Kyotushuzan (2-1) bt
Listatoriid (1-2); Kyotushuzan (3-0) bt
Shildshima (1-2); Kotonishiki (1-2) bt
Wakanohana (1-2); Kotonishiki (1-2) bt
Wakanohana (1-2); Kotonishiki (1-2)





Ferguson's laughing cavaliers

which confirmed the primacy of the partnership between Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole and killed off any lingering hopes the likes of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Teddy Sheringham may have harboured. The moment when, as David Beck-

ham's other half might have put

it, two became one hell of a duo. The scene was the Nou Camp Stadium in November, early in the second half of a frenetic Champions' League fixture. After the shock of conceding a first-minute goal to Barcelona, Manchester United had recovered to equalise through Yorke. Probing the left side of the home defence. Roy Keane rolled a pass inside towards the Tobagan 25 yards from goal... whereupon Cole takes up the story.

"Dwight dummied it and as soon as he let the ball run I knew that he wouldn't stand still, that he'd make a run. So I thought I'd play a one-two. Dwight could either go on himself or knock it back to me. Fortunately for me, he knocked it back." Unfortunately for Ruud Hesp, Barca's Dutch goalkeeper. Cole knocked it past

The scorer's analysis talks of what he "thought" he would do. Milan tonight, Yorke has

Yorke and Cole enter the San Siro as possibly the best strike force in United's history. By Phil Shaw

The latter's brace in Satur-

day's win at the club who sold

him for £7m, Newcastle, means

it is already the most prolific

partnership of the Ferguson

era, overtaking the mark set by

Eric Cantona and Mark

Hughes in 1993-94. Yet what

really sets apart the double

act which could bring the

Treble to Old Trafford is the

transparent pleasure Yorke and

Cole take in making goals for

In his mind's eye McGuin-

ness, a former Busby Babe

and England player, can still see

Tommy Taylor in tandem with

Dennis Viollet before Munich.

He worked with Best. Law.

Chariton and Kidd, and ad-

mired the link between Hughes

and Brian McClair. But he has

no hesitation in hailing Yorke

and Cole as Old Trafford's best

attacking partnership "by a

they're basically similar play-

"The funny thing is that

each other.

However, the most striking as- amassed 26 goals and Cole 21. pect of the build-up was the apparent lack of deliberation and the part played by intuition, or "telepathy" as Wilf McGuin-ness, the former United player and manager, characterises it. When Yorke stepped over the ball he knew instinctively that Cole was behind him and moved instantaneously for the pass which was duly played.

Cole, in turn, anticipated precisely where to run for the reciprocal pass from Yorke. In a matter of seconds the ball nestied in the Catalan net, prompting Alan Hansen to hail the goal as "a masterpiece".

Since that game, which finished 3-3, the understanding that was blossoming between United's front two has burgeoned, perhaps even beyond Alex Ferguson's expectations. Beckham, whose crosses enabled Yorke to give United a 2-0 first-leg lead over Internazionale in their European Cup quarter-final, says the pair's perpetual motion make his job easy.

ers," he says. "They're not the classic pairing of a strong Going into the second leg in ad and a foil who feeds off him. They're both fast, darting strikers whose biggest

> and sharpness in the goal area. They've both got quick feet. They're both good at shielding the ball, with surprising upperbody strength. Both turn well, and they're better in the air than you'd expect for their

asset is movement off the ball

The fact that they are also bosom pals - Yorke rang Cole when he could not find the training ground on his first day and they immediately hit it off - has enhanced their relationship on the pitch, according to McGuinness "It shouldn't matter if you don't get on with a certain team-mate. But if two train together a lot - the hardplayers are good buddies, they er they practise, the more teledid with Bobby Charlton and Eddie Colman, but then we were all friends in that side."

O'Neill wins Republic recall

take his place in the travelling

party having recovered from a

back injury suffered in Satur-

ager, Lawrie McMenemy, has

called up the Bournemouth

striker Stephen Robinson and

Chesterfield's defender Mark

Williams for the games against

linked with a move to Fulham.

is the latest player to be tried

to answer Northern Ireland's

McMenemy said of Robin-

son: "We are always in the

market for a goalscorer.

Stephen has shown that he

has the knack in this area. He

Robinson, who has been

Germany and Moldova.

goal famine.

The Northern Ireland man-

day's 3-2 defeat by Derby.

Now covering the club as a broadcaster, a role which took that the empathy stems from mer tends to drift into deeper him to Barcelona and will also find him in Milan. McGuinness

The Liverpool defender Dowie and James Quinn and

Steve Staunton will be able to we'll take it from there."

ing them to hotels. Culturally,

the other sticks in the re-Their friendship is such that the other players reputedly

tease them about how often committed to Trinidad & they pass to one another. They Tobago), and his influence may a famous maxim about luck in golf - as well as hanging out with each other

has surprised those who expected Yorke to provide for Cole but not vice versa. The forpositions and to go wide more,

Magilton. Also omitted is the

Leicester centre-back Gerry

Taggart, who, like Magilton,

often he is the beneficiary of Cole's new-found selflessness, most recently at Chelsea in the FA Cuo.

Yorke is the more complete performer. The audaciously chipped goal over Ed de Goey at Stamford Bridge was no one-off; he had the confidence and the skill to dink a similar shot over David Seaman from the penalty spot for Villa against Arsenal last season. Now that he is playing for a side who tend to dominate ssion, we are seeing the full range of his attacking

talents. "I could understand why the club were so keen to get him," McGuinness says, though John Gregory got them In playing terms, the pairing But he looks a snip now, if you can say that about someone who cost £12.6m; a classic United player. He was a very good

Parma's panache banishes **Bordeaux**

Parma win 7-2 on aggregat

HERNAN CRESPO and Enrico Chiesa scored twice each as Parma thrashed Bordeaux 6-0 yesterday to overturn their narrow first-leg deficit and ease into the Uefa Cup semi-finais.

Both Crespo's goals were set up for him by the defender Paolo Vanoli in the 37th and 66th minutes, while Chiesa scored with a long-range shot in the 43rd and rounded off a counterattack by converting a pass from Crespo in the 59th.

Crespo's compatriot, Juan Veron struck a brilliant free-kick just after half-time, and Abel Balbo made it four for the Argentinian contingent with a late penalty.

Bordeaux, who lead the French league, arrived at Tar dini stadium intent on protecting the 2-1 advantage they gained in the first leg two weeks ago, but their defensive strat-

egy backfired. Victory kept alive Parma's quest for a rare treble; they are in the Italian Cup final and are tied for second place in Serie A. But the 1995 Uefa Cup-winners will have to play their semi-final first leg without defensive stalwart, Fabio Cannavaro, who collected his yellow card of the tournament after being booked for handball in the 54th minute.

Otherwise, everything went Parma's way. In the 37th minute, Diego Fuser's pass found Vanoli on the left, he drew the goalkeeper, Ulrich Rame, and slid the ball inside for Crespo's first. Then Vanoli's dummy run left space for Chiesa to collect Dino Baggio's long pass for the second.

Just after half-time, Veron curled in his free-kick to make it 3-0 and Chiesa took Crespo's through ball to fire in the fourth. Then Crespo scored from Vanoh's nod-down of a 40-yard pass by the French World Cup winner, Lilian Thuram.

Balbo got the last goal, with two minutes to go, after the Bordeaux defender Nisa Saveliic. standing near the penalty spot, inexplicably grabbed the ball out of the air with both hands.

treatment

BY DAMIAN SPELLMAN

to set a fair price if they intend selling him. The 33-year-old England midfielder has made just one start since Boxing Day through a combination of injury and the form of the German Dietmar Hamann and the reju-venated Welsh international

Gary Speed in central midfield. Newcastle would probably want £2m for the veteran and Lee hopes the high price will not deter interested clubs. "Players don't have a say in how much they are worth, but if the club is looking to sell me, I would hope they would set a fair price." he said.

With the loss of the captaincy to Alan Shearer. Lee admits that the writing is on the wall. That message was driven home to him when he appeared as a second-half substitute in the 2-1 home defeat by Manchester United last weekend.

"Dietmar and Gary have done very well lately, but that doesn't stop me being a good player," he said. "When I came on the other day, we just seemed to get in each other's way. I can't really envisage the three of us playing together un-less we played with wing-backs.

"My problems started with that Achilles injury. I've had the longest spell of my career on the sidelines, but I still feel I'm one of the best players at this club and have a lot to offer."

Lee joined United from his only other club, Chariton, for what proved to be a bargain £700,000 in September 1992, first playing wide on the right before moving into the middle to establish his partnership

with David Batty.
A number of clubs have been linked with Lee, although he has spoken to none. The fee could be a problem but he is not getting involved in any negotiations.

Arsène Wenger has added another prodigy to Arsenal's growing teenage ranks. The latest arrival is German youth international Moritz Volz, signed from Schalke 04 in a deal reported to be worth £150,000a-year to Germany's former under-15 captain from the start



Dwight Yorke (left) and Andy Cole celebrate another magic moment for their prolific partnership

THE FERGUSON YEARS: A STRIKING IMPROVEMENT

Manchester United's leading scorers in all competitions*

1986-87

Whiteside 10, Frank Stapleton 9. 20, Ryan Giggs 17. Brian McClair 31, Bryan Robson Andre Kanchelskis 15, Eric

11, Gordon Strachan 9. 1988-89 Mark Hughes 16, Brian McClair

16. Rryan Robson 8. 1989-90 Mark Hughes 15, Mark Robins 10. Brian McClair 8.

1990-91 Mark Hughes 21, Brian McClair 1991-92

Brian McClair 24, Mark Hughes 14, Andre Kanchelskis 8. 1992-93

striker, Keith O'Neill, has been

recalled to the Republic of Ire-

land squad for the Group Eight

European Championship qual-

his 20-man travelling squad.

ing Norwich for Middlesbrough

for £700,000, missed the 2-0 vic-

tory over Paraguay in Dublin on

10 February because of an

ankle injury. Carr gets his

chance because of injuries

which rule out Gary Kelly, Cur-

tis Fleming, Jeff Kenna and

McCarthy will be anxious

that there is no repeat of the

Viduka's transfer from Croatia

Zagreb, according to newspa-

Rory Delap.

O'Neill, on the brink of leav-

THE MIDDLESBROUGH-BOUND BY ALAN NIXON

ifying tie with Macedonia in now. We didn't do ourselves

Skopje on 27 March. The Irish justice that day," said Mc-

manager, Mick McCarthy, has Carthy. "It's a huge game for

also called up the uncapped us and vitally important.

Spurs defender Stephen Carr to Yugoslavia play Croatia on the

1993-94 Peter Davenport 16, Norman Eric Cantona 25, Mark Hughes

Cantona 13. Andy Cole 12, Mark Eric Cantona 19, Paul Scholes 14, Andy Cole 13.

1996-97 Ole Gunnar Solskjær 19, Eric Cantona 15, David Beckham 11. 1997-98

Andy Cole 26. Teddy Shering ham 14. David Beckham 11, 1998-99

Dwight Yorke 26, Andy Cole 21, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer 15 (so far). Mark Hughes 16, Ryan Giggs 11, *English clubs banned from Europe Brian McClair 9, Eric Cantona 9. 1986-87 to 1989-90 inclusive

donians in Skopje in a World

Cup qualifier in April 1997.

"That result doesn't matter

same night in another Group

Eight game. But I won't be

concerned about that result if

priority against the Macedo-

nians, or at least not be beaten."

goalkeeper Dean Kiely, Brad-

ford's midfielder Gareth Whal-

ley, the Wimbledon winger

Mark Kennedy and Fulham's

Steve Finnan on standby in

"Three points has to be the

McCarthy has put the Bury

we can win in Macedonia

Cole are always first to congratulate each other after a goal. While pointing out that Cole's link with Cantona was not exactly unproductive, he

acknowledges that there was no comparable rapport. "These two play for each other," he says. "Strikers normally have to be selfish, or at least single-minded, but they love helping each other. And the way it's going, if one hits the bar

The simplistic explanation is the fact that both are black and

For Williams, 28, the in-

ers". Yet Cole is a Nottingham boy who spent much of his adolescence in London after joining Arsenal, whereas Yorke used to keep his family in the West Indies above the poverty line by catching crabs and sell-

their backgrounds could scarcely be more contrasting. Whatever the reason, the bond has brought Cole out of his shell. Graham Taylor, who took Yorke to England as a teenager after spotting him on an Aston Villa tour once remarked that it would be nice to see Cole smile. Yorke, of course, could grin for England (were he not

account for his partner's less

player at Villa - now he looks a great player."

Wales wait on Giggs' fitness for Swiss date

THE WALES manager, Bobby Gould, is praying that Ryan Giggs comes through his two big games for Manchester Unit-ed this week so that he can make his comeback in his comtry's crucial Euro 2000 muslifier in Switzerland on 31 March.

Giggs, in action against Internazionale tonight and Everton in the Premiership on Sunday, played in Wales' opening Group One fixture against Italy in September, a 2-0 defeat at Anfield.

But the United player was ruled out through injury from the two victories in Denmark and at home to Belarus which have given Wales a genuine chance of qualifying for their first major finals since the 1958 World Cup in Sweden.

There is no question that if he stays fit Wales' most talented player will be on the team sheet against the Swiss. That would give Gould a difficult decision over who to leave out from the side that played so well in the two October victories, culminating in a night of national pride and passion at Ninian Park when Belarus were beat-

mark over Giggs' fitness following his recent return from another Achilles problem for an Old Trafford side now chasing the Premiership, Champions' League and FA Cup treble, and Gould will not rest until he actually joins up with his Wales team-mates on Thursday

Gary Speed, who missed the Belarus game through sus-

pension, will return to the side as captain to win his 50th cap. There is also a recall for Sunderland's Andy Melville after a fine season with the Nationwide First Division leaders, while the Nottingham Forest goalkeeper Mark Crossley comes back

Hoddle's caveat that Cole

needs too many chances to

score, believes there is still a

question mark over him

against top-class opposition.

McGuinness argues that is no

longer the case: "Andy hasn't

really had a chance to prove

himself with England, but at

European level he's blossom-

ing due to this partnership.

That goal in Spain was a per-

asked to operate as a lone

striker, with Yorke and the wide

players taking more withdrawn

forced by Ronaldo, are sure to

throw men forward.

oles. Inter, doubtless rein-

work hard when the Italians

when the gaps should appear,"

says McGuinness. "It was cru-cial that Inter didn't get an

away goal. With Yorke and Cole,

"United are going to have to

In the San Siro, Cole could be

fect example."

Wimbledon's £7.5m striker John Hartson, who has recovered from persistent injury and suspension problems to claim a place in the Dons' side, is included for the first time since last summer's games in Malta

party along with Preston's Kurt

in Winterthur on 30 March, includes the Liverpool 19-year-old youth player Layton Maxwell for the first time, while Everton's John Oster also makes his comeback at international level

Comeback at international level after SUSPENSION.
WALES SCHAD (for European Champtonhip Qualifying Group One match against Switzerland in Zurich, 31 March): Joses (Southampton), Mard (Notts County), Cressley (Nottm Forest), Robbisson (Charlton), Jenkins (Huddersfield), Barnard (Sarnsley), Brollopa, Symous, Coleman (all Fuharn), Revittes (Sunderland), Williams (Wolves), Johnson (Nottm Forest), Savage (Leikester), Speed (Newcastle), Haghas (Southampton), Pembridge, Sammders (both Benfics), Blake (Blackburn), Hartson (Wirtbleton), Giggs (Man Utd), Bellamy (Norwich), Seandby: Coyne (Tranmer), Marriott (Sunderland), Detaney (Aston Vita), Page (Wapford), Edwards (Nottm Forest), Cabass (Swanson), Nogan (Preston), Roberts (Norwich), Nogan (Preston), Roberts (Norwich).

erning body, the Celtic owner. Fergus McCann, refused to pay stances. Viduka has advised Viduka's transfer fee, although Celtic that certain Croatian ofit now appears that he feared ficials will receive part of this he was being set up. One newspaper reported that The letter is believed to have the player himself warned Mcbeen lodged with world foot-Cann that part of the cash would ball's governing body, Fifa, algo directly to officials of the though following initial were added.

Croatian club. The paper claimed to have a copy of a let-Celtic's fears. ter signed by the Celtic director Fergus Sweeney which proves the Parkhead club called for a

The letter stated: "My club

is understandably disturbed at the events surrounding Vidu-Viduka went back to his ka's transfer, and the depths of native Australia immediately its concern can be gauged by following the 13m deal, claim- the fact that the circumstances ing that he was too stressed to have been reported for invesplay. Despite the demands of tigation to the British police Zagreb and promptings from with a view to ascertaining Uefa, European football's govwhether there are any fraudulent elements in those circum-

inquiries the police could find no wrongdoing to substantiate

Zagreb have so far received 2900,000 for a player who has Premier League.

Viduka transfer probe CELTIC HAVE called in the fraud squad to investigate Mark the deal. senior police investigation into scored four goals in his first two games for Celtic. A final ruling

on Viduka's transfer is expected from Fifa later this week. The Dundee midfielder Dariusz Adamczuk, who was sent off in Saturday's defeat by Dunfermline, has been banned for six games by the Scottish Football Association. A report from the referee

Hugh Dallas has disclosed that Adamczuk was given two red cards, the first for a second booking and the second for his remarks to the referee. This meant he was automatically suspended for two games and, as he passed the 16-point threshold, an extra four games

Adamczuk will not be back until the final three games of the season as Dundee struggle to avoid relegation from the

ternational call has come late has been included in the standafter a solid performance in the B international against Wales last month McMenemy said: "Mark gave an impressive and disciplined show in that game.

has been included in the standby panel.

REFIRELO OF INELAND SOLIAD [for
European Championship Qualifying
Group Eight match against Macadonia is Stopje, 27 March): Given (Newcastie), Reify (Sheff Uzr), Irwin (Man Uzr),
Carr (fottenham), Harce (Leeds),
Seanston (herpool), Castingham (Vimbledon), Breen (Coventry); Babb (Liverpool), Rasna (Man Utri), McAlteer
(Blacisburn), Kisnellis (Chariton),
McLoughils (Portsmouth), Carsiey (Derby), Deff (Blacisburn), Gaism (Sunderland),
Cascarino (Nancy), Keane (Wolves),
O'Nelli (Nonsich), Cossoliy (Wolves),
NORTHERR IRELAND SOUAD (to
face Germstry in the European Champlouship qualifier at Windsor Park,
Beilfast, 27 March); Egylor (Fuham),
Fettis (Blacisburn), Hughes (Newcastie),
Williams (Chesterfield), Morrow (OPR),
Patterson (Durdee Utri), Hill (Northamptord), Romand (OPR), Hamber (Reading),
Williadey (Man Chy), Gillespie (Blacisturn),
McCarthy (Birmingham), Louans (West
Ham), Souser (Sheff Wed), Lesson
(Leicester), Hughes (Wirtledon), Dourle
(OPR), Gulpa (West Brom), Robinson
(Bournemouth). We were sufficiently impressed to have no hesitation in promoting him to the senior squad The Reading centre-back Barry Hunter, who has been on loan at Southend, is recalled to the squad. He has had an appalling 12 months with injury but is now well on the road to

Also included is the Sheffield Wednesday midfielder Danny Sonner, but there is

for these games."

Milne committed to revitalising Aberdeen

find the necessary money to help the Pittodrie club improve their poor position in Premier

The Dons suffered a humiliating 5-1 defeat - their worst home reverse in 38 years - to Celtic on Sunday, after which their captain, Derek Whyte, questioned Milne's desire to halt an alarming slide. Whyte claimed Aberdeen need to start buying players in the £2m bracket if they are to regain their past status. But, so far Milne has sanctioned only the £250,000 transfer of Andreas Mayer from

Rosenburg in January.
While Milne insisted the nlavers must share the blame for a run of depressing results. he confirmed that finance will be found to fund the plans of the six points off the bottom.

ABERDEEN'S CHAIRMAN, manager, Paul Hegarty. "Money Stewart Milne, has pledged to is not the problem," said Milne. "It is finding the right players. We badly need reinforcements, particularly in defensive areas. But I won't accept other players using that as an excuse for how things are going. The players must share responsibility for the position we are in." Aberdeen have conceded 48

goals this season - the worst record in the Premier League - much to the concern of Whyte. "I feel embarrassed because I have rarely lost 5-1 in my career, let alone at home," he said. "The sort of players we need might cost £2m, and it all now hinges on how ambitious Aberdeen really want to be." Aberdeen's poor run of re-

sults have seen them slip into the bottom half of the table, just after a long absence through in-

and Tunisia. The Norwich youngster Craig Bellamy, who scored a superb winning goal in Denmark, is also named in the squad, while Mark Delaney, Aston Villa's recent signing from Cardiff, is in the stand-by

The under-21 side, who play

HI NO CON

Morris in Pitman hands over the reins call for one Greg Wood on a governing authority

BY TREVOR RANDELL

that Ali would have been out-

prospect of his fighter meeting

Holyfield at Wembley in a re-

match. Lewis's camp want the

return to be at an alternative

British venue, though, and Mal-

oney urged the sports minister,

Tony Banks, to offer his support.

Wembley because US televi-

sion controls the situation. It

can come to somewhere else in

Britain if we match the money

that is put up by the Americans.

We hope that Tony Banks will

get the private sector involved."

In response, Banks said: "I

am always keen to focus the

eyes of the sporting world on

Britain and I will, of course, help

in any way I can towards se-

curing the rematch. It is vital

that boxing recovers from the

body blow its reputation has re-

ceived and I think that hosting

the fight in Britain would go a

significant way towards this."

TODAY'S

NUMBER

107,000

The number of spectators

a capacity crowd -

expected in Sydney's new

Olympic Stadium for the

Australia v New

Zealand rugby union game in the Bledisloe

Cup in August. Only

2,200 tickets remain

unsold. The world

record is 95,000.

"The rematch can't be at

Maloney also ruled out the

muscled by the bigger man.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY of the British Boxing Board of Control, John Morris, has called for a world body to bring order to the sport.

Morris has campaigned for five years to establish a Fifastyle organisation to oversee championship bouts. The debate over Evander Holyfield's controversial world heavyweight championship draw with Lennox Lewis has led to calls for a worldwide reform. Morris believes a world gov-

aning body could be established with powers to enforce rules in the conduct of title fights, although promoters would still be allowed to make the deals and stage the bouts.

"Fifa's job is to safeguard its sport so that everyone can get the benefit of it and in boxing we have to project our sport in the best possible way," he said.

Morris argues that the World Boxing Council, World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation, the three organisations involved in the New York controversy, are sanctioning rather than governing bodies. Each has its own regulations and a streamlined approach is needed, particularly the United States where box-

ng is run by state commissions. Morris feels a world regulatory body would have responsibility for medical provision, fight rules and the selection of judges and their supervision. He feels neutral judges are needed.

"Four or five years ago L and the then [BBBC] president, Sir David Hopkin, wrote to all the major administrators calling on them to co-operate and we had a lot of support. There was a very favourable reaction from Japan and states within America who have benefited greatly from the work of the Associa-

tion of Boxing Commissions."
"The whole set-up has improved in the US and the ABC is a far more forceful body which is defending the interests ne sport. But what is need is funding and top professional administrators."

stronghold and established her own Garrison

woman who

broke into a turf

THEY CALL her the First Lady of Aintree, but it was at Cheltenham yesterday that Jenny Pitman, perhaps the most famous racehorse trainer in the country, chose to announce her retirement. Her son, Mark, will take over the licence at Weath-Lewis's manager, Frank ercock House, in Lambourn, be-Maloney, yesterday claimed that his fighter would have fore the start of the next National Hunt season. As she beaten Muhammad Ali. Maldelivered the news in an interoney described Lewis as the view which was broadcast to "best finisher in the heavythe nacked Festival enclosures weight division" and claimed both mother and son were in

> It is just a few months since Pitman revealed that she had successfully fought off cancer, but she said that the illness had not influenced her decision. "I am happy to say that it is nothing to do with my health," she said. "I am not ill, but this seems the right time for Mark to take over. I'm not really retiring but I won't be playing centre forward any more. I shall be on the subs' bench. I've hardly been anywhere outside this country apart from Ireland and Spain and Italy. I would love to see the big races in Australia and the United States and Dubai."

Cheltenham has featured prominently in Pitman's 24year training career, most famously when she became the first - and so far only - woman to train a Gold Cup winner with the success of Burrough Hill Lad in 1984. Seven years later, Garrison Savannah won the same race, with her son in the saddle, but the following season Pitman was the focus of less flattering publicity.

She was accused of running Golden Freeze, a 150-1 nohoper, in the Gold Cup simply to upset the hot favourite, Carvill's Hill, and thereby increase the chance of her other runner, Toby Tobias. She was cleared of any malpractice at a Jockey Club inquiry, but among the thousands of punters who backed Carvill's Hill, the memory can still raise hackles.

last fence in the William Hill Na-"I wanted to make the announcement here at Cheltional Hunt Chase, it seemed tenham because of the that Nahthen Lad had read vonderiui warinin everyone une script, but ne could not nnd i Ness, who here has shown to me over the a final effort to take him past in the void National of 1993. She scends racing and is known by way mother wants me to. This successful female trainers in years," Mrs Pitman said yes- Betty's Boy and Island Chief, is also one of only two trainers every man and woman in the is the end of an era. I have rid- Britain today are in her debt.

and finished only third. But Mrs Pitman does have a runner. Ginger Fox. in the County Hurdle on Thursday - the last race of the meeting. It will be a popular choice with punters.

A tearful Jenny Pitman announcing her retirement to crowds at Cheltenham yesterday

fessional trainer, but it wouldn't There will be a tearful parting from Aintree too next month. Pitman trained two Grand National winners, Corbiere (1983) and Royal Athlete (1995), and also saddled Esha

street. She has always been to have a complete set of Nationals, in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Mark Pitman was his moth-

er's assistant until setting up as a trainer in his own right in 1997. He plans to train about 80 horses at Weathercock House, including 35 recruits from his current yard.

ie post hrst game," he said. "She wall- why dest shot and carry on the match for her, and the many

"Mother has been one of the best-known people in the himself, he added: "I shall give

straight and told the truth and those are her ideals. I hope I'll be able to uphold them. I am going to be the captain of a very big ship and we won't be looking to be just among the best in Lambourn. We want to be among the best three stables in the country."

David Ashdown

THE JENNY PITMAN FILE

Born: 11 June, 1946, one of seven children in a Leicestershire farming family.

Early career: Left school at 15 to work as stable girl for Chris Taylor. Married Richard Pitman and bought a yard at Hinton Parva to train hunter chasers and point-to-pointers. Re-married (to David Stait) in

First trainers' licence: 1975. First winner under rules: Bonidon at Southwell on 25 August, 1975.

Cheltenham Gold Cup Chase winners: Burrough Hill Lad (1984), Garrison Savannah i up said

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King George VI Chase winner: Burrough Hill Lad (1984). Grand National Handicap Chase winners: Corbiere (1983), Royal Athlete (1995).

Scottish National Handicap Chase winner: Willsford Weish National Handicap Chase winners: Corbiere

(1982), Burrough Hill Lad (1983),

Stearsby (1986). irish Grand National Handicap Chase winner: Mudahim

Midlands National Handicap Chase winners: Watafella (1977), Willsford (1990).

Other big winners: Bueche Giorod (Massey Ferguson Gold Cup 1980), Gainsay (Ritz Club Chase 1987), indefence (Supreme Novices' Hurdle

1996). Master Tribe (Ladbroke 1997), Mighty Mogul (Persian War Novices' Hurdle 1992), Mudahim (Racing Post Chase 1997), Nahthen Lad (Sun Alliance Chase 1996), Princeful (Stayers' Hurdle & Long Walk Hurdle 1998). 1998: Awarded OBE for ser-

vices to racing in the New Year's Honours list.

den for mother, been her as-

sistant trainer and we have

been closely involved for a long

time. If a door doesn't open she

will try and open it politely. But if it still doesn't open she'll kick The sturdiest door which

Pitman pushed against was the one which insisted that training racehorses was a man's job. It was, inevitably, no

ang 1852 (1964)

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September 1

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HUNTINGDON treatm 1.50 Real Fire 2.20 The Red Rector 2.55 Tom

Pinch 3.30 Alka International 4.10 Seize The Day 4.40 Trouble Ahead 5.15 Club Sandwich

GOING: Soft (Good to Soft in places).

Flight-hend, level course. Fun-in 200yds.

Course is at junction of A1 and A604, Hursingdon station (service from London, Kingts Cross) tm. ADMISSION: SS all enclosures (today only). CAR PARK: Free.

FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS

FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS

LEADING TRAINERS: K Belley 9-90 (20%), G Hubberd 17-82 (20.7%), Atts M Reveley 15-41 (36.8%), J Gifford 14-79 (17.7%).

ELEADING JOCKEYS: R Dummondy 21-51 (25.9%), M A Fizgerald 17-93 (82.9%), P Hide 15-65 (23.1%), N Williamson 14-77 (82.2%).

EAVOURTIES: 247-550 (44.9%).

MI LANS DISTAINES BI BRIEFES Seen (33.0%) series 254 miles. M LONG DISTANCE RUNNERS: Earp (330) sent 254 miles. BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Earp (330), Tylo Steemer (visored).

1.50 KEYSOE SELLING H'CAP HURDLE (CLASS G) £3,000 added 2m 5i 110yds

1. SEPSPP HELLD ME MAN (50) B Liswelly of 11 12 ... Mr J L Liewellyn
2. 684335 HOTSPUR STREET (44) E L James 7 if 5 ... Mr J L Liewellyn
3. 2053P COLWALL (22) (3) A Hobbs 8 if 8 ... Miles S Samsorfe (7) B
4. 45P902 REAL (FRE (16) M Meagher 5 10 8 ... R Wildiams (5) V
5. 6007P SONITA BLANGHEY (63) G Baiding 8 if 5 ... M Worthington
6. 005-00 DUNETON HEATH (22) B Leavy 6 if 0.5 ... W Worthington
7. 0007P JULTIS SPUR (22) D GWARDLY 6 if 0.1 ... R Supplie
8. 6685-P BAYLOND PRINCE (37) (0) Mrs. J Ever 11 10 0 ... Miles C Dyson B

 Stoof BICKYDONEY 60Y (11) Max Z Davison 10 10 0.

 Goldstein (3)

 -9 declared
Minimum weight: 10st. Bue handicap weights: Baylord Prince 9st 12to, inclychare Rev 8st 11th. chang Boy St 11th. SETTRIC: 9-4 Real Fire, 3-1 Hotspar Street, 4-1 Cohesti, 6-1 Dumston Heath, 10-1 Helio Me Man, 14-1 Inchysionny Boy, 16-1 Others

FORM VERDICT Real Figs has to be considered after his return to form lest firms but the percentage call is COLWALL, whose second at Fortwell last month reads well enough for this assignment.

2.20 HITCHIN HAULAGE MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 5f 110yds P HAVEYCLHEARD (E2) G McCourt 5 11 5 _____ D Fort (2)
GO JUST (DESMOND (F163) Mass C Coros 5 13 5 _____ C Webb
OSPP MANINA BRAVE (19) A H Harvey 5 11 5 _____ A Senith
GO OP MCGAYE FRT (81) J Newto 5 11 5 _____ T Descorabe
PP4 MCRE FUN (USA) (29) M Benter 6 11 5 _____ R Hobson (7)
605 POURGLEY MILL (16) J Gifford 6 11 5 _____ P Hosp
DAME D BITES manual come (2) 6 04385 PURE SMANG.(336) J Pauco 8 11 5 Edger Byrne (7) 7 25-02 THE RED RECTOR (16) K Baley 6 11 5 Edger Byrne (7)

- 17 declared -BETTRIC: 9-4 Audicias, 11-4 The Red Rector, 4-1 Auligna, 8-1 American Syla, Burn Cot, 10-1 Pounsiey Mill, 20-1 Cookers III, More Fun, 33-1 others FORM VERDICT

AUDACTER ran well in the Festival bumper this time test year and is steeply improving over hunder. The Red Rector would probably be impoper of the ground dired out.

2.55 ALCONBURY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) £3,000 added 3m MS2- SHEELIN (AD (441)(C) Ms T Mornes Server TI 10.T Read 01P25 ZAMBEZI SPIRIT (123) (D) Ms M Jones 10 TI 5 D Syrate P250 DEST OF NONOR (27) (D) R Lee TI TI 5 Mr P Costable (7) B P270P NO FOLDLING (28) (D) G MCCOUT 8 TI 5 E Hashand 2035 TROUVABLE (53) A Turnet 8 TI 4 W Manaton — 12 declared — 12 declared Matemati: File: Tote Ir cap registes, shorelighter Set (2th, Lechwista Set (3th, SETTING: 4-1 Moorelighter, 5-1 Text Plack, T-1-2 No Februaria, High Mond, 13-2 Wan Warbier, 10-1 Sheelle Lad, Zambazi Spirit, Trouvallia, 16-1 others

Planty of reasons to oppose each of the runners but WREN WAR-BLER is weighted to win a race of this nature on more than one piece of form and her third at Ludiow last time received a timely boost when the runner-up wor at Taunton on Monday. No Fid-ding should be seen to much better advantage back at today's trip, while Than Pinch must go well again if his jumping holds up.

FORM VERDICT

3.30 GETECH WINDOWS LADIES H'CAP HURDLE (F) £3,000 2m 110yds 32-262 AUXA INTERNATIONAL (25) (D) Mrs P Townsky 7 12 0 ...

-8 declared
Minimum weight: 10st. True handlag weights: Do Be Ware 8st 8th.

BETTUNG: 3-1 Distant Stone, 7-2 Bertolomare Palt, Captain Biggies, 4-1

Alka international, 6-1 Euro, 14 Bayyadi, 16 Bigrehael 888, 33 Do Be Ware FORM VERDICT

CAPTAIN BIGGLES is on the upgrade and it will be interesting to see how he gets on against the ultra-related Alice interrestional, who is much more exposed but is dropped in class. The others make less appeal.

4.10 THURLEIGH HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 3m 2f 1 5-502 SEZE THE DAY (11) (C) (SF) M Coombe 11 20 Miles M Coombe 2 2PPD TILITY (USA) (55) (CD) A Streeter 9 11 12 Gery Lycos V 3 2PF-F WEE WINDOY (25) (C) J GRIped 10 11 7 P Hide 4 2505 EALING COURT (SS) A Carroll 10 13 W Mileston 5 00FF-T THE MEDICANS GONE (210) D Georgity 11 10 11 R. Supple 5 50405 TM (25) (C) J Juniors 9 10 9 M Grapitos (S) 7 15673 W MITEROWNET (11) C Jectors 9 10 5 Miles S Jectors 8 6052 TYLO STEAMER (8) (F) D Miles 7 10 0 D Gratitios V 9 570-26 GRUNGE (69) (SF) D Miles 7 10 0 D Gratitios V 9 570-26 GRUNGE (69) (SF) D Miles Carrol - Strain W Strain 10 0 D Gratitios V 9 570-26 GRUNGE (69) (SF) D Miles Carrol - Strain 10 0 D Gratitios V 9 10 0 D Gratitio 1 5-502 SEIZE THE DAY (11) (C) (SF) M Coombe 1 20 ___

FORM VERDICT Titly could make a bold bid to compete a hat-trick in this event if he gets things his own way, but there may be improvement to come from TYLO STEAMER, who again showed stamma when a clear second at the atiff Towcester track last week.

4.40 BOLNHURST NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,000 added 2m 4f 110yds

SETTING: 5-4 Trushie Ahsed, 5-4 No More Hassie, 6-1 Ciprisni Casen, FORM VERDICT

Although Thouble Ahead looks a promising novice classer and providing current wall-being with an impressive win in testing ground at Teurston test time, slight preference is for NO MORE HASSLE, who may have the better speed at this trip.

5.15 SWINESHEAD STANDARD OPEN NH FLAT RACE (H) £1,750 2m 110yds

— 13 declared — 85TTHG: 4-5 imoniyose, 3-1 Continier Survivor, 7-1 Clab Sundmich, 12-1 Port of Call, 14-1 Tomoojid, 16-1 Gandagg Gavetta, 25-7 others FORM VERDICT

Club Sandwich comes from a stable whose runners must always be teared in this type of race but the pick on form is ITSONLY-NEE, who is still immarize but will improve as he strengthers up and who showed planty of tenacity to win in the mud last time.

NEWTON ABBOT

HYPERION 1.55 True Fortune 2.25 Blue Blazer 3.05 Fleet ing Maindate 3.45 Tight Fist 4.20 Purple Ace 4.55 Ticket To The Moon 5.30 Stretching

vellous memories of Chel-

tenham. It would be very nice

if I could go out with a winner

at my final Festival as a pro-

be the end of the world if I

For a few strides after the

GOING: Soft Element, steep, course with short run-in,
Course is N of town on ASSO. Newton Abbot station for.
ADMISSION: Tettersalis 211; Course 25. Accomparied under-16s free. CAR PARIC On rails 22, remainder free.

16s free. CAR PARK: On rais 52, remainder free.
FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS
III LEADING TRAINERS: M Pipe 96-355 (27%), P Hobbe 53180 (284%), P Micholis 35-153 (229%), R Frost 28-250 (104%).
III LEADING JOCKEYS: A P McCoy 69-26 (319%), R Duramody
43-28 (339%), J Frost 25-200 (129%), C Maude 19-114 (138%).
III FANOURITES: 297-882 (435%).
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Mr Mad (visored, 455).

1.55 A J BLACKLER RENAULT AND EXELL H'CAP CHASE (F) £3,500 3m 2f 110yds

FORM VERDICT

Catieva Star is the one numer in this weakly-contested race who ran to his best lest time but he is vulnerable on the betance of his recent form off a 4b higher mark. THUR PORTURE has good prospects of beating him at these weights II back to something close to his best, exid though below form on his last two runs, the merathon trip is a pleusible excuse.

2.25 LITTLE CLOSE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £4,000 added 2m 6f

REPAIR TO Landbord 9st 20.

BETTING: 7-4 Accommon Lady, 11-4 Stoe Blazer, 6-1 The Minder, 7-1
Februarth Bay, 8-1 Elegant Des Cosses, 12 Bright Ferne, 14 Landbord FORM VERDICT

BLUE BLAZER has the best recent form even allowing for his being out of the handleap and, proven in trace conditions, may be the assert to a trappy-bodding contest. Accountancy Lady is the big unknown in serupuch that she would the one to best on her best form but has just one pusied up run to her name this season.

3.05 HELEN CHALLACOMBE END OF FREEDOM MAIDEN CHASE (F) 53,500 2m 110 yds

-7 decimed BETTING: 9-4 Spy Dessa, 5-2 Fleeting Handata, 5-1 Favor Pitch, 11-2
Step in Line, 10-1 Milliord Way, 25-1 Benji, 33-1 Queens Curata.

FORM VERDICT FEVER PITCH has a chance on his Leicester form and is taken to best Fleeting Mandata.

3.45 HORSES FOR COURSES HANDICAP CHASE (E) £4,000 added 2m 5f 110yds

- / caccarec Minimum weight: 19st Tun hundicep weights: Crientel Style 9st 11th.
BETTING: 7-2 Tight Figt. 4-1 Held Your Ranks, Oriental Style, 9-2 Koo's
Promise, 5-1 Coder Square, 7-1 Melling, 33-1 Maple Denote

FORM VERDICT

A tricky race full of horses that don't win very often. With the Frost stable coming back to form it could be worth chancing the vateran HOLD YOUR RANKS who has won six times round here and didn't run too badly over an inadequate 2m here last morth.

4.20 A J BLACKLER PEUGEOT PARTS MAIDEN HURDLE (E) £3,000 2m 6f

4000' CYPHRATIS (715) D Writis B 11 4 _______ Mr P Flycm (7)
QP1-0 DACELO (FR) (8) H Howe B 11 4 ______ Mr P Flycm (7)
2-203 HASTIEN BAK (8) R Floot 5 11 4 ______ Prost
2-25540 L*DEFD((26) T George 7 11 4 ______ O MicPhall (5)
COP LABIRA BAY (45) C Popham 5 11 4 _____ O MicPhall (5) ballow, Border Trader, 16-1 Dacelo, 25-1 others

FORM VERDICT Purple Ace has the form to win this on last year's efforts but the

wory about the trip and also his current form eiter a moderate season over fences makes him worth taking on. L'IDEFIX stays well and is in recognisable form, so is marginally preferred. 4.55 TOTNES AND BRIDGETOWN NOVICE HUNTER CHASE (H) \$2,000 2m 5f 110yds

P21F-P (CING OF CAIRO (25) Charles Smith 11 23 __Mr W Smith (7) 20(32 MARCHING MARCAUS (13) (BF) G Brown 8 12 3 _Mr T (Sibney (5) 38P-22 MR MAD (25) Mrs D Horrer 11 12 3 _____Mr P Homer (7) V P4P-P2 NO MORE NICE GUY (25) D Turner 10 12 3 ___Mr A Hand (7) P62-5F POOH STICK (167) R Frost 9 12 3 ___Mr A Hobbsworth (5)

- 14 declared --BETTING: 5-6 Marching Marquis, 9-2 Rusta Mas, 8-1 Just Bac, 12-1 Mr Med, Flying Maria, Tichet To The Moos, 14-1 No More Nice Guy, 25-1 others FORM VERDICT

MARCHING MARQUIS has shown enough to win a amail hunters' chase and this easier opportunity affords a good opening. Resta-lian is much respected against him.

5.30 COME GREYHOUND RACING H'CAP HURDLE (F) \$2,400 2m 1f 1006 MR PERFECTA (S2) (CD) R Ficel 8 11 10 ____ T O'Commor (7)

7 00090 BROOKSEE (11) R Carson 4 to 0....... BETTING: 2-1 Charlie Ching, 3-1 High Low, 5-1 Mr Perfects, 6-1 Opti-mintic Thinks; 7-1 Almapa, 12-1 Stretching, 16-1 Brooksic.

FORM VERDICT CHARLIE CHANG is in cracking form at present and despite the rise in the weights, is worth following in a race which is less than

■ Sedgefield's first meeting since three horses were killed there last month in an horrific accident caused by horses running loose was completed without inci-dent yesterday. Two further catchment pens have been introduced to tempt riderless horses off the course but fortunately they were not needed. Protesters laid a floral wreath and handed out leaflets to racegoers yesterday. Five members of the Newcastle Animal Right

Coalition picketed the entrance to the course for an hour and a half in a peaceful demonstration.

RACING RESULTS

CHELTENHAM Going: Good to Soft (Soft in places)

(fell).
22 ran. 14, 114, nk, 11k, 4, 3, 2, sh-hd, 10, 13, 4, 8. (Winner chestrut golding by Cettle Cone out of Heeter Ann, trained by L Lungo at Carrutherstown for R J Geberth. Tota: 12370; 8400, 8300, 1840, 18390 DF-18130. CSF: 1230. DF-18130. CSF: 1230. BF-18130. CSF: 1230. BF-18130. CSF: 18130. Thosat: 1708205. NR: Crabapple 18, Tordutt Express.

Placepot: £302050. Quadpot: £26250. Place 6: £204574. Place 5: £72651.

Gaing: Saft

SEDGEFIELD

Going: Soft

2.25: 1. DOCKMASTER (Richard Guest) 8-1;

2. Keicashde 9-2; 3. D'Arbisy Street 9-2;

13 run, 9-2; 3.0. (Mass Kais Miligari, Michelenn).
Thie: 5680; 5:29, 5:20, 5:40, 5:60, DF: 5:430.

CSF: 5643. Ticast: 570370.

3.00: 1. HEAVY HUSTLER (C McCommack)
8-11 len; 2. Empearor's Megic 8-1; 3. Fryang
Satellite 5-1.8 run, 5, 1½, (J Howard Johnson, Crook). Tota: 5:150; 5:20, 5:160, 5:200.

DF: 5550. CSF: 5348.

3.35: 1. CATHEDRAL BELLE (G Lee) 1-5
tex; 2. Farnarh's Darbing 10-1; 3. Permy Peppermint 33-1.14 run, 8, dist. (Mrs M Revely, Seithum). Tota: 5:40; 5:10; 5:17, 5:88.

DF: 5280. CSF: 5348.

4.15: 1. RIVER UNSHBON (D Parked) 11-10

fav. 2. Nosem 7-2; 3. Back Bar 18-1.8 run.

10, 28. (J Howard Johnson, Crook). Tota: 5:290. E5:50, 5:50, 2:50, 2:50, 5:50. GSF.

25:68 Tricast: 53894.

4.50: 1. TRADE DISPUTE (Mr G Tuer) 5-4
ter; 2. Hilltonshown Luss 3-1; 3. Oromore 4.50: 1. TRADE DISPUTE (AF G Tuer) 5-4 fev; 2. Hillmastown Lass 3-1; 3. Oromore Dresses 14-1 14 ran. 19, 1 (E Tuer). Total C200; C100, C220, C340, DF: C290, CSF: 3498.

5.20: 1. JARAAB (B Harding) 8-1; 2. Oriel Lad 8-1; 3. Camden Fallow 2-1 12 ran. 7, 1/s. (Denys Smith, Bishop Auckland). Total C2000; C450, C250, C140, DF: (1st or 2nd with any other) C3000, CSF: CSF33. Theast-CSS705. NF: Accysten.
Pleasesot: 57230, Dundoot: CS10.

SOUTHWELL Going: Standard

SOUTHWELL
Going: Standard

1.48: 1. KING PRIAM (R Price) TO-1; 2. Magleal Shot 3-1 fav; 3. Torn 20-1; 10 ran. 11/s,
shirt, (M Polgiase), Toise: EDAG; 5240, F160,
E330. DF; 538:30. CSF; 53760. Tricast;
SS6575.

2. Carrie Pooder Evers fav; 3. Abbani 4-1
8 ran. 11/s, 1/s. Six Mark Prescott. Toise: EDG;
C10; 2100, 2230. DF; 2180. CSF; 5200
2.56: 1. KATIF'S CRACKER (F Nortor) 2-1;
2. Hilliam 4-1 it tay; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
TO-1 4-1 it fav; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
TO-1 4-1 it fav; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
TO-1 4-1 it fav; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
TO-1 4-1 it fav; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
TO-1 4-1 it fav; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
TO-1 4-1 it fav; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
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TO-1 4-1 it fav; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
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TO-1 4-1 it fav; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
To-1 4-1 it fav; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
To-1 4-1 it fav; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
To-1 4-1 it fav; 3. Two Oor The Bridge
CSF; 52395, Tucast: 5773,34
4.05: 1. SWHT (K Fision) 11-2; 2. Mr
Fortywhite 20-1; 3. Moulcari 10-1 7 ran. 13-8
fav Green Bopper (4th), 1, 7. (M Polgiaso)
Totas: 5205, 5270, 5640, DF; 52240 CSF
fav Green Bopper (4th), 1, 7. (M Polgiaso)
Totas: 5205, 5277, 5640, DF; 52240 CSF
fav; 2. Pola Mist 23-1, 3. Sammary 14-1, 15
ren. 1, 1/2. (D Nichols), Totas 2270; 5369, Thoest
STOST, MR; Bold Frontier
Place 6: 1, 24603, Place 8; 25738.
Place 6: 1, 24603, Place 8; 25738.

Spring in Society's step

FOR THE tens of thousands of By GREG WOOD Irish punters who have turned Cheltenham and its surroundings into County Gloucestershire, even Istabraq's victory that makes the effort seem yesterday was merely a rehearsal. Today - St Patrick's Day, by a happy co-incidence, ed, for if the race were a handis when the serious business begins, as Alexander Banquet including the main fancies, and, above all, Nick Dundee would be rated within a few carry fortunes into battle for the visitors. Ireland is booming just now, but defeat for both of today's great hopes might just be the difference between suctip the economy into reces-

Such is the burden of hope attached to Nick Dundee in who is by some way the outparticular that the Queen Mother Champion Chase, in theory the feature event of the second day, almost feels like one of the supporting events. Yet it Call Equiname quickened well

best chance of the afternoon to worthwhile

And effort is certainly needicap, several of the runners, pounds of each other. Not many, though, have the scope for improvement which will probably cess and failure. The ones who do are Call Equiname, Edredon sider of the three.

All that seems to prove, however, is that both punters and ran well at the meeting in 1997 bookies have short memories. arguably offers punters their to win the Victor Chandler Arkle and Champion Chase in

Chase in January, but a hand-successive years, he may save has a wonderful cruising speed. the season when second in a icap under 11st 3lb is not the his best form for Cheltenham That's his strength, he can handicap at Ascot last month. same as a championship race in the spring. At around 8-1, it find a winner at the sort of price at the Festival. Edredon Bleu, meanwhile, may find that the ground conditions are not quite in his favour. Neither deserves to start at such a skinny price.

> RICHARD EDMONDSON Nap: Easter Ross (Cheltenham 3.15) NB: Dr Bones (Cheltenham 5.05)

Hill Society (2.35) is no certhe Arkie Trophy last year, and too. Like another Irish horse.

is a chance worth taking.

The favourites for the Champion Chase are easy to oppose, but it is much harder to find a reason to doubt Nick Dundee (3.55). The drying ground is a slight worry, but Eddie O'Grady, his trainer, feels that "he will get away with good ground", and in every other respect, he looks a champion in the making

"He's the best novice chaser I've ever had," O'Grady says. "He arrived at my yard with an Bleu and possibly Hill Society, tainty, but he does at least have extraordinary reputation contouched off in the final stride of bumper and a point-to-point. He was like a crossword puzzle with a lot of blanks, but gradually we're filling in the odd one Klairon Davis, who won the here and there. He's getting

cruise and tump."

enough to get Nick Dundee while Sounds Like Fun (5.05) home, but life will be more dif- will surely go close in the Mildficult for the other Irish banker, Alexander Banquet. At least three of his British rivals, Barton, Behrajan and Rash Repoint of view is the Bumper, mark, could be good enough to has run up an impressive se-2.00), whose only defeat in four outings this season came at the hands of Hors La Loi III, who

Novices' Hurdle yesterday. Polar Prospect (next best 3.15) has had plenty of racing this season, but he seems to

He is a very live outsider at It should be more than around 25-1 for the Coral Cup,

may of Flete. which will be one of the most beat him, and while Barton popular contests of the entire meeting with the Irish backers. quence in the north, the value As ever, the visiting challenge bet must be BEHRAJAN (nap will be strong, and includes Alexander Prize, who will attempt to give Willie Mullins his fourth successive win in the a liking for Cheltenham. He was sidering he had only won a trotted away with the Supreme race. Biliverdin too will take some stopping, but for one the race may stay at home. Martin Pipe believes that Golden Alpha (5.40) is best bumper

2.35 QUEEN MOTHER CHAMPION CHASE (Grade 1) (A) £170,000 addéd 2m £98,600

Owner; present-cours transmit to Calibrate in Game Sport Chase at Newbury (2m 11, good in soft). Previously weakened two out when 18 languist shoth to Care Man in Cusen Mother Champion (Crease at Challertess (2m, good). Summire; Declaration (2m, good). Summire; Declaration (2m, good). Summire; Declaration (2m, good). Summire; the Tingle Chast care the Game Sport Chase to Languist Chast (2m, whenting the Tingle Chast care in Game Sport Chaste (2m, good). if he can recepture his best form.

Going & Distance & Jumping & Railing 148

st Ascot (2m 31 110yds, good). Previously 11/4 lengths second to Casabrian Cits (211b worse) in Casabriga Limited Hendicap Chese at Wetherby (2m, soft).

8 F-421 EDREDON BLEU (88) (CD) 7yo 12st.... BUREDON RELEU (SR) (CD) Tyo Text. A P Microy Overaer. J Levid Tissiner. Miss if Kright Porter. Made all to best Mandys Mentino by nine lengths in Embridge Handicap Crees at Sendown (2m, good). Previously hearbed last within 2% lengths second to Others Rousts in Tingle Creek Inputy Crees at Sendown (2m, good). Summary: Top crees front-runing classes. With Patenthorough Chase at Hurlangdon, no Direct Route class at Sandown and showed his well-being last time. On the forecast good ground he must hold every chance.

Going of Distance of Assepting of Relieg 140



11 -0P212 MEALLIGAN (22) (D) Syo 12xt Owner: Lady Harris Trainur: D Nicholson
Forms: Lad eighth to four cut when 2½ langths second to Cellibrate in Garne Spirit
Cress et Nanbury 2m 1; good to soft) Previously led near the when besting Arrahaman
by half a langth in Marsion House Handlicip Cress at Doncaster 2m 100 pts, good)
Sammany: Useful cresser who has returned to the best form lately. However, needs
to improve a good further to hold much chance here and his jumping has let him down
on occasions in the past.

Going

Distance

Jumping X Refing 125



12 36R30P OR ROYAL (33) (CD) Byo 12st...... Owner: D Johnson Trainer: M Pipe From Flycotart to acce and pulsed up any time in deathe spirit crasse at restroing Part 15 good to soft). Presidently reducent to race and tailed off in Poter March Limit-ad Handicap Crease at Haydook (2m, soft).

Summery: Formerly useful dresser who won the Antic Challenge Texting (Norice) Crasse two seasons ago but has become most moodly and unco-operative and had refused to race on his lest two outlings. Must be legated with extreme countion.

Golog «* Distance »* Jumping ** Rading 132



Designed and compiled by lan Dayle

O'Brien the all-conquering hero

IT TAKES a proper crack to bag full of bookmakers cash and open up the absurdly serious young face of Aidan O'Brien. In victory or defeat, he always manages to look like a man who's just mislaid his wallet. Standing self-consciously on the victory rostrum, with JP McManus and Charlie Swan, O'Brien broke into a rare smile to acknowledge a chorus of Irish voices which broke through the mayhem of the winners' enclosure.

Commemoration in song is the ultimate accolade for any Irish champion and, in just under four minutes of blistering action, Istabraq had more than earned his tribute. "We've had Monksfield,

Night Nurse and Dawn Run Danoli and Derrymoyle. But they'd find it hard to beat this one Istabraq from Ballydoyle." Words by Maurice Curran and Garry Lyons of Dublin, to

a few beers on a recent flight back from San Francisco. Istabraq from Ballydoyle. There was never much danger of the words being wasted at Cheltenham yesterday. "Billy Bunter could ride this one," Chartie Swan had told Maurice Curran at Leopardstown recently. They had won a hatful on him last year at 3-1 and piled into the odds on offer vesterday until the bookmakers realised the error of their ways and sent him off the shortest price favourite for the Champion Hurdle for 45 years. "Cause he

jumped the last, Istabraq from But there was more to the tumultuous welcome Istabraq received than could be recorded in rhyming couplets. Dawn Run and Jonio O'Neill raised the roof when he completed the double be sung to a traditional Irish air. of Champion Hurdle and Gold

won't be passed when he's

Another pulsating Champion Hurdle victory thrusts an equine idol from Ballydoyle into the realm of legend and song.

> his way into the fretwork of him in the usually raucous li, though just short of the top class, and his country trainer, Tom Foley, became the unwitting symbol of Ireland's equestrian genius. But Istabraq is different. His pedigree is aristocratic, his owner one of the richest men in Ireland and his trainer plies his trade from a purpose-built equine palace. His claims to democracy stem

from the pocket and there can be no broader constituency. A year ago, Istabraq was running for the health of the Ex- crowning with a robust sim-

Andrew Longmore reports Cheltenham history and Dano- fashion. Yesterday, the bid was more noble than another snatch and grab raid on the bookies' satchels. "Ready to

join the greats," the morning headline read. As the familiar green and gold colours moved nonchalantly onto the heels of the early leaders, every powerhouse stride propelled Istabraq further into exalted realms and the crowd, mindless of the betting slips in their pockets, responded to the thrilling sight of a champion's

scarf was hurled high into the blue Cheltenham sky. In truth, the real danger came not from the other 12 horses in a field reduced to trotters long before the final burst

known long before and a green

up the hill, but the weight of the history books and the threat of a ricked neck for Swan, who twice before the final flight flicked a disdainful look at the stragglers behind. There had been brave talk of revenge from French Holly's connections, reduced to nothing more than paper talk once Swan had set sail for home two flights out.

The statistics will tell you that Istabraq is the first successful defending champion since See You Then, who won three in a row in the 1980s, but the more disconcerting truth for prospective English challengers is that the seven-yearold's best might still be to come.

hit a rich vein of form. He pro-

vides me with two rides today

and both have a chance of win-

Frosty Canyon, my ride in

the Bumper, has the unusual

McManus, Swan and O'Brien mumbled sweet nothings into the microphone, though inner emotions must have run high. "I must pay tribute to Aidan and everyone else back at Ballydoyle about how well Istabraq always looks. Whenever I see him, at home or on the gallops, he never has a hair out of place," McManus said in a rare burst of eloquence. They have no real need to sing Istabrao's

about it for a while. His one

worry - and his fresh face does

not betray many sleepless

nights - was that Istabraq's

gathering speed might some-how impede his stamina. It

was the slenderest of threads

on which to hang any coherent

opposition and the bookmakers

knew it. The weighing-room

In the post-race interview,

had given up long ago.

praises. Others have taken care of that. "For he's our hero from old Ireland, Istabraq from Bal-

Flagship flies high

record for the opening day.

chequer and those whose for- plicity. Swan raised an index fin- In that whispering way of his, Inspiration courtesy of a swag Cup. little Monksfield galloped tunes had been made greeted ger to denote what most had O'Brien had been warning us Lord of the River set to deliver

IN JUNE 1996 an unbroken four-year-old gelding by Lord Americo entered the sale ring at Fairyhouse. His destiny was going to be decided in the next

He was an attractive horse with correct conformation and a reasonable pedigree. He walked quietly around the stage of this circular theatre oblivious to the importance of the noise from the rostrum. After a sustained battle between Irish trainer Arthur Moore and agent Keith Lewis the hammer fell at 80,000 guineas. He left the ring as the most expensive store horse to be sold in the British



<u>0891 261 970</u>

Jamie Osborne, who has joined the Independent's writing team at Cheltenham, looks ahead to the races in which he hopes to ride today. Osborne was taken to hospital yesterday for x-rays on his right hand after his mount, Kadou Nonantais, fell in the William Hill National Hunt Chase. He was having physiotherapy last night and the course doctor will decide this morning whether he can ride today

Isles that year. Quite a burden on such young shoulders. The horse had never been ridden, let alone galloped. He had never jumped, nobody knew the size of his engine nor the willingness of his brain. Sales poppers rarely prove to

be the best racehorses. Take Sheikh Mohammed's 10.2m dollar yearling purchase he named Snafi Dancer. The horse didn't possess sufficient ability to see a racecourse so he was retired to stud only to be found to be infertile. This poor gelding didn't even have that option. However. Brian Stewart-Brown signed the cheque, sent the horse to Oliver Sherwood and named him Lord Of The River.

Today, the same horse faces the biggest test of his fledgling career. He has proved this season to be worth every penny of his lofty price-tag having won the Feltham and Reynoldstown Chases. He possesses a big engine and an amazing will to win. His jumping, which was slightly awkward in his first few chases, has improved rapidly in

confidence has grown and his form has become stronger. peak and I am confident that he Celibate at Newbury. Today he can dent Nick Dundee's high reputation and put himself in line for the Millennium Gold Brian Stewart-Brown also son Paul Webber's horses have

the past couple of months. His

Today you will see him at a

owns Ask Tom my ride in the Queen Mother Champion Chase. This horse was bought privately after finishing second to Suny Bay in a four-yearold point to point in Waterford

He has proved a great servant to his fearless owner. Second in this race two years ago he ran badly last year after suffering a training setback. Another injury has restricted him to just one race this season when he was well beaten by will strip much fitter and cannot be left out of calculations in what looks a very open race. After a slow start to the sea-

six years ago.

His dam, Rose Ravine was a Fulke Walwyn-trained ultratough winner of the Stayers' Hurdle. Her son has inherited her staying power and in a race where stamina is a must this horse holds a great each

> Hoh Express cannot claim the same family links to the Festival. Himself a winner of a Listed race on the Flat in Germany. his dam won three races as a two-year-old. His breeder certainly did not have the Cheltenham Festival in mind when planning the mating but despite that he has taken well to lences and could be a handicap snip in the Mildmay of Flete Handicap

Jamie Osborne is carrying the logo of The Independent on his breeches and collar throughout

THE FLAG that was fluttering boldest yesterday may have been the Irish tricolor, but there was also victory for another pennant. Flagship Uberalles, in distinction of being the son of the stars and stripes of Amera previous Cheltenham winner. icans Michael and Elizabeth Krysztofiak, took the Arkle Trophy, ending Paul Nicholls's barren run at the Festival. It was a first professional win at the meeting for Joe Tizzard. Success has come more con-

sistently for Martin Pipe and Tony McCoy. The former is now level with Vincent O'Brien on 23 Festival winners following the win for Hors La Loi III in the opener. Only Tom Dreaper on 26 stands ahead of him. For McCoy it was a fourth consecutive Festival win. Hors La Loi III was priced at 7-1 by Ladbrokes for next year's Chamoion Hurdle. The crowd of 46,470 was a

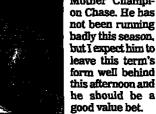
Celtic Glant was a 20-1 winner for Hyperion in yesterday's Kim Muir Chase at Cheltenham

Professional punter SIMON 'DODGER' McCARTNEY

CHARLIE BROOKS, the former trainer, has told me that BARTON is the best horse he ever had and I know Simon Sherwood would have loved to have kept <u>him</u> when he took over

Brooks's yard. Barton is with Tim Easterby now and has been so impressive this season, particularly at Doncaster, that I think he should win the opening Royal & SunAlliance

My friends in Ireland tell ne that HILL SOCIETY has been laid out for the Queen



but I expect him to leave this term's form well behind this afternoon and he should be a good value bet. Finally, my Irish contacts tell me that NICK DUNDEE is a world-

beater and cannot be opposed in the Royal & SunAlliance (Novices') Chase. He could have run in the

Gold Cup tomorrow but sensibly his connections have decided to take this easier op-

Today: Any overnight fog will clear quickly, to be followed by a dry and sunny day. It should be the warmest day of the year so far, with the temperature rising to 16 or 17 degrees.

it will be more humid than of lete.

CHELTENHAM WEATHER temperature unlikely to rise above 12 degrees. After a cloudy start there should be some sunny spells, although there is a chance of rain later

	1989	90	91	. 92	93	94	95	96	97	98
Fate of the favourities:	1	1	2	1	3_	F	1	3	5	6
Winner's place in betting	g: 1	1	٥	1	3_	9	1	0	9	3
Starting-prices:	7-4	11-10	<u>9-1</u>	ev	11-1	4-1	5-2	9-1	9-1	7-2
Winners' ages:	8	9	8	8	6	7	8	7	10	10
Profit or loss to £1 stal	ke; Fa	vourit	88 +	20.35	Sec	and F	EVOLET	ites -	£10.00	
Percentage of winners	place	d 1st,	2nd	or 3n	d for fa	et rec	e: 90			
Shortest-priced winner	: Remi	tience	Man	11992	7 000	'				

Top trainers: D Elsworth – Bambrock Again (1989 & 1990)

D Nichotson - Vilding Flagshtp (1994 &-1995) Top jockey: No jockey has won this race more than once in the past 10 years